THE RAGOZIN COMPLEX



A GUIDE FOR WHITE AND BLACK

VLADIMIR BARSKY



NEW IN CHESS

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Vladimir Barsky

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A Guide for White and Black

New In Chess 2011

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Published by New In Chess, Alkmaar, The Netherlands
www.newinchess.com

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Cover design: Steven Boland
Translation: Steve Giddins
Supervisor: Peter Boel
Proofreading: René Olthof
Production: Anton Schermer

ISBN: 978-90-5691-370-0

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From the Author

First of all, I would like to say a few words about two people who have made an enormous contribution to this opening, which is so popular in our day. The defence, which nowadays hides behind the faceless Informator index number D38, bears the name of Viacheslav Vasilievich Ragozin (1908-1962), a top grandmaster and theoretician. He was a close friend of Mikhail Botvinnik and helped him in many highly important competitions, including world championship matches. As a practical player, Ragozin probably did not fully realise his potential, but even so, the fact that he played in ten USSR Championships (his best result being shared 2nd-3rd places in 1937) says plenty about his uncommon strength. He was champion of Leningrad, and fought for its defence during the Second World War, experiencing the full horrors of the siege. Soon after the war, he won a match against Bondarevsky and secured the grandmaster title, and in the Chigorin Memorial tournament of 1947, he finished second, ahead of Keres, Smyslov, Boleslavsky, Kotov, and Gligoric. An inventive analyst, he won the second world correspondence championship in 1959.

Let us return to those years, when the aspiring young artist Ragozin was just beginning to develop his formidable opening weapon.



It is interesting that the defence came about in large measure through a feeling of contrariness! In his article 'The Significance of the New York tournament (1924) for Opening Theory', Alekhine discussed various new ideas in the Queen's Gambit, and came to the conclusion that developing the black bishop to b4 did not bring Black anything positive: '...Still less can one recommend the development of the bishop to b4 on move four (as in the game Capablanca-Marshall), since then by the reply 5.♕a4+! White can force 5...♘c6, which makes it significantly more difficult for the opponent to achieve the important task of opening lines in the centre. It is remarkable that the world champion did not exploit this possibility.' Viacheslav Ragozin later admitted 'Strangely, it was precisely this note that served as the incen-

tive for Black to research this whole defensive system. Alekhine claimed that after 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.e3 White had superior development, but later tournament practice showed that 5.♕a4+ is premature.'

It is interesting that Alekhine soon softened his opinion of the line. In his game against Colle at Hastings 1925/26, he chose the variation as Black, and explained his choice thus: 'Although, strictly speaking, this defence is not fully correct, it is not easy to refute. I chose it specifically in order to convince myself of the practical chances which can arise in the event of inaccurate play by White, and of those dangers which he faces, if White plays correctly.' Be that as it may, the genie was now out of the bottle, and in the 1930s the new defence, through the efforts of Ragozin principally, but also of other Soviet and European players, attracted more and more attention and was tested in tournaments of the very highest level.

Mikhail Moiseevich Botvinnik remembered his friend thus: 'Ragozin was a quiet, careful man of few words. Curly-haired, with rather solemn facial features, he looked as though Mother Nature had started chiselling him a sharp face, and had then been interrupted and never quite finished her work... His chess talent was unusual. One can say that he had a good intuition and combinative vision, but others too have these characteristics. So what specifically did Ragozin's ability consist in? The chess pieces possess two values. One is well-known, one may say their nominal value. Two hundred years ago, the great mathematician Euler estimated the value of the chess pieces as: king 200, queen 9, rook 5, bishop and knight 3 and pawn 1. In general, one can agree with these values; one only needs to make one correction. If the king is worth 200, its actual strength is no more than 4, whilst if the strength of the pawn is 1, its value increases from 2 to 8 (that is, 3-1=2 to 9-1=8) as it approaches the eighth rank.

Thus, we can agree on the nominal values of the pieces. But as well as the nominal average values, there is another price, depending on the position. It is hard even to give a name to this figure; one might call it the "market value". It is clear that a chess player, sitting at the board, should not only know the average nominal value of the pieces – even beginners know this – but must also be able to divine their market value. This task is very complicated and requires specific ability. Ragozin was able to orientate himself very quickly and dexterously in this marketplace, and excellently understood the market value of the pieces in a given position. Perhaps I am mistaken, but it seems to me that this was the main aspect of his talent, and consequently, he was able to bravely enter into sacrificial variations.'

Incidentally, had it not been for Ragozin's oratorical skill, and his ability to convince people, Botvinnik might never have become World Champion in 1948. It was Ragozin who headed the Soviet delegation to the 1947 FIDE Congress at The Hague, which looked at the question of reconstructing the chess world after the war. Prior to the war, the Soviet Union had not been a member of this 'bourgeois' organisation, but after the death of Alekhine (with whom Botvinnik was negotiating for a world championship match) it changed its position. The Soviet delegation had many adventures getting to The Hague and only arrived on the final day of the Congress. The delegates had already taken the decision to declare Max Euwe World

Champion (as the only living ex-World Champion) and to organise a match between him and the American Samuel Reshevsky, but after Ragozin's speech, they changed their decision. International Master Mikhail Yudovich recalls: 'Many years later, at the 1972 Olympiad in Skopje, having heard that I was working on an article about the world championship, Euwe said to me "Don't forget to mention that I was World Champion twice – from 1935 to 1937, and for one day in 1947, at the FIDE Congress, before the Soviet delegation arrived!". Euwe said this with a friendly smile, but I remember that back in The Hague at the time, he had been very upset and disappointed.'
I will add only that for fifteen years, right up to his death, Ragozin was actively involved in the work of FIDE, as its Vice-President.



Viacheslav Ragozin

I should like to end this short piece about Ragozin with the words of his contemporary and comrade, Salomon Flohr: 'In chess, Ragozin was a fearsome fighter, but even more, in his creative approach, he was an artist, an explorer (and a very successful one) of truth and beauty. At the board, he was never "stingy", never thought only about material, and in life generally, he was no businessman.

Unlike many chess players, Ragozin never worried about losing the exchange. If anything, it was the opposite – he was often keen to sacrifice rooks for minor pieces! In his creativity, richness of ideas, original thoughts and sharp fantasy, he can in my opinion be put on a level with Mikhail Ivanovich Chigorin. Whenever we see a young player with an inventive, sharp style, we describe him as a "typical Chigorinist!". I think we can equally justifiably call him a "real Ragozinist"!'

♦ ♦ ♦

' "Habent sua fata libelli." Books have their fate. This was an old saying. The fate of Lipnitsky's book *Questions of Modern Chess Theory* cannot be described as a happy one, with the best will in the world. It is a legendary book, yet also mysterious and hard to explain.' With these words, Anatoly Karpov opened his Preface to the second edition of the Lipnitsky book. Why is this book so important to us? Suffice it to say that this book, the second half of which is devoted to the Ragozin Defence, made such an impression on the young Bobby Fischer, that largely because of it he

began to play the Ragozin regularly (and in Lipnitsky style) and even went to the lengths of learning Russian!

The Kiev master Isaak Lipnitsky (1923-1959) as a child studied chess in the same section with David Bronstein, under the tutelage of Alexander Markovich Konstantinopolsky. At 16, he was already playing in the Ukrainian Championship, but at 18, the war started, and Lipnitsky was sent to the front. He fought at Stalingrad, and ended up going all the way from the Volga to Berlin, and was a representative of the Soviet Command in the Berlin control commission. He ended the war as a Major, and was awarded a number of war decorations and medals.

After the war, Isaak Lipnitsky returned to his beloved chess, twice becoming champion of the Ukraine. His greatest achievement was sharing 2nd-4th places in the 1950 USSR Championship, where he finished ahead of (and beat in individual games) Smyslov, Petrosian, Geller, Averbakh... He was only 27 years old, but already soon afterwards, his strength began to ebb away, in the face of a fatal illness...

Once again let us give the microphone to Anatoly Karpov:

'Realising what was happening, Lipnitsky gradually gave up practical play. He concentrated on coaching and writing his book. It appeared in 1956, but very much in a peripheral way – published in Kiev, in what by Soviet standards was a very small print-run, littered with misprints. It seemed that at the very moment of its publication, the book was doomed to oblivion. But then something strange started happening...'

'Lipnitsky recommends'... 'In Lipnitsky's opinion' – such phrases are to be found in the writings of Botvinnik and Fischer. Two great champions, quite different from one another, yet both took Lipnitsky's book very seriously. 'Widely known in a narrow circle', not reaching the mass of readers, the book occupied a significant place in the home libraries of grandmasters and trainers. But the biggest fuss was made amongst people who had not even read the book, and had only heard about it or seen the odd extract quoted somewhere. The book became a legend.

What is so special about it?

It is amazingly, fantastically 'non-banal'. Just flick through and read any couple of pages at random, and you will soon convince yourself of this. There are plenty of books which are honestly put together, and whose authors work hard to convince you that two plus two equals four, and the Volga flows into the Caspian. And then there are books which awaken the mind...

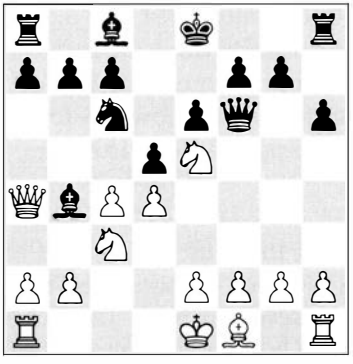
So, at the beginning of the 21st century, the book received a second life. But only part of it – as the blurb explains, 'the outdated section on the Ragozin Defence has been replaced by a selection of Lipnitsky's best games, with his own annotations...'

♦ ♦ ♦

I was lucky. I became acquainted with Lipnitsky's book when I was young, when I myself was an active player. To be honest, I do not recall who recommended me to read this rare book, but it made a deep impression on me. I immediately wanted to

include the Ragozin in my repertoire, so precisely, accessibly and convincingly did the author explain the main ideas of this aggressive opening. However, studying the variations more deeply revealed that over the years (and this was in the 1990s) theory had moved forward a long way, many assessments had changed, forgotten variations had become topical, new lines had been developed, etc. The usual story – who could expect otherwise? Soon after, I started studying the Chigorin Defence. I think it was familiarity with Lipnitsky's book which helped me get over the prejudice that after 1.d4 d5, a black knight on c6 is always badly-placed. Within five years, I had moved over entirely to journalistic and training work. I am pleased that I have been invited to write a book on this opening variation, with its long and interesting history.

I finished work on this monograph in May 2011 in Kazan, where the Candidates' matches were taking place. In the press centre, I met German journalist Dirk Poldauf, and we discussed what was going on. I told him about my book, and the fact that I frequently quoted Lipnitsky, whose explanations and even variations had not lost their topicality. And then Dirk surprised me. It turned out that the German magazine Schach, for which he works, in 2010, had published an article by Mihail Marin, called 'Old wine in new bottles', devoted to the theme that contemporary players could find it highly useful to be acquainted with Lipnitsky's thoughts on the Ragozin! For example, Marin explains how, in the summer of 2009, during the Spanish team championship, he watched a game between two players rated around 2400. The opening moves were 1.c4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.♕a4+ ♘c6 8.♘e5?



8...0-0?!, and the game ended in a draw. Afterwards, Marin asked the players the obviously rhetorical question of whether they knew the game Beilin-Lipnitsky from 1950, in which Black played 8...♗d7!!. Hearing, as expected, a negative answer, he switched on his computer and began to show them this old game (in the present book, it can be found in Chapter One as Game 7).

Let Mihail Marin take up the story: 'As I was showing the game, other players joined us, and I had to show it again and again, at least half a dozen times. All of the spectators (amongst whom I must mention the strong grandmaster Potkin!) were

delighted by the elegance of the game in all its stages. In other words, my display achieved great success!

I have to admit, however, that although I saw this game in the English edition (in the new section "Selected Games of Lipnitsky" – VB), this incident convinced me to take a closer look at the theoretical section on the Ragozin in the original edition of Lipnitsky's book. My researches were amply rewarded – I found a whole mass of things, which could be useful even today.' It was extremely nice to hear the renowned theoretician Mihail Marin confirm my own conclusions.

In my work, I have followed the principle formulated by Lipnitsky: identify the systems and variations, which practice has established in the Ragozin Defence, and are inherent in its main strategic and tactical ideas, whilst trying at the same time not to pay too much attention to the issue of what the formal opening indexes may regard as the Ragozin Defence (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 ♗b4 (5.♗g5 h6)). Based on this approach, I decided to analyse the Westphalia Variation in detail (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 ♗b4 5.♗g5 ♘bd7), but practically to ignore the Vienna Variation (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 ♗b4 5.♗g5 dxc4), since its basic ideas are quite different from those of the Ragozin Defence. The book also briefly highlights some related variations from other openings (especially the Nimzo-Indian Defence), which can transpose into the Ragozin.

Lipnitsky wrote: 'In many books and articles on opening variations, the main attention is devoted to the so-called topical variations, the "topicality" of which is often determined by the author's own tastes. Many other variations are relegated to the category of little-used or old-fashioned... But chess fashion is very fickle. Fashionable variations, like fashionable clothes or music, give way to others, often those which have been relegated to the "little-used" or "old-fashioned" pile...'

It has to be admitted that since that time, the attitude of chess players to opening theory has not changed one bit: the vast majority concentrate on some popular line, and introduce innovations around moves 15 to 20. But it is worthwhile turning slightly to the side, and 'skiing off-piste', as it were, in the way Marin described in his article.

In my book, I have also used the same breakdown of systems, as suggested by Lipnitsky. The main part of the book consists of 65 theoretically important and interesting games, divided into seven chapters. The games are given in full, so as to acquaint the reader with the typical devices and methods of play in Ragozin middlegames and even endgames. In the notes to the opening stages, I have tried to go into as much detail as possible (subject to the limits of the book's size) of the current state of theory. In some games, for methodological reasons, I have changed the opening move order, so as to fit the theoretical conclusions to the 'common denominator'. But the book starts with an article by Lipnitsky, entitled 'How to study a concrete opening', in which he explains the basic ideas of the Ragozin. With the exception of one or two small corrections, I have hardly changed anything in the text, because it has retained completely its modern relevance. I could, of course, have added a number of modern critical positions, but I decided not to do so. They

nearly all relate to the seventh system (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5), which Lipnitsky considered boring and colourless, and to which he devoted only two pages. In our day, this line has become extremely popular, and the theory grows by leaps and bounds; in practically every major tournament, theoretically important games are played in it, and the assessment of one variation or another changes. I therefore ask for your understanding, if a critical position or two has escaped my attention.



Isaak Lipnitsky (Kiev 1939)

In conclusion, I should like to thank the great trainer Mark Dvoretsky for his help with this work. He gave me a file with annotated games played in the Ragozin by himself and his pupils. Mark Izrailevich rates Lipnitsky's work very highly, and still recommends its study to everyone, who wishes to improve his chess. In his time, under the influence of Lipnitsky's book, he started to play the Ragozin, and very successfully. Even so, Dvoretsky admits that he never understood the defence as well as his friends, the grandmasters Gennady Sosonko and Boris Gulko (in fact, Boris Frantsevich still plays the Ragozin with both colours to this day, and achieves good results).

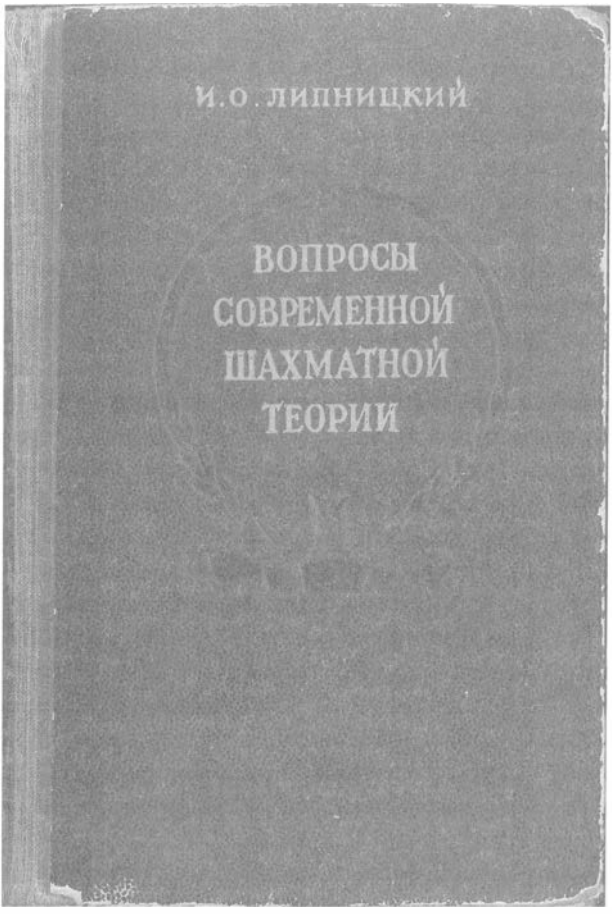
Many years ago, Mark Izrailevich told me an interesting story about his appearance in the 1975 USSR Championship. One of the grandmasters of the older generation, now deceased, suspected him of 'throwing' his game against his friend Gulko, and started interrogating him:

'Why did you play the Ragozin against him? You have never played it before!'

Not hiding his distress, Dvoretsky invited the grandmaster to come to his room and showed him a fat exercise book, filled with handwritten analyses of this opening. Six months ago, when I told Dvoretsky that I was writing the present book, he immediately pulled this legendary exercise book out of his archives, and invited me to use his analyses: 'Of course, they are very old, but there may be the odd useful thing!'.

I gratefully made use of his offer of help, and did indeed find in the book many interesting analyses and assessments. But it was something else that really surprised me: Dvoretsky wrote the material out for his own use, because he was a young and promising player, playing in the Soviet Championship, yet he wrote the notes with a pedagogical style, as if they were addressed to others, his pupils and readers. Even then, he could not escape his instincts as a great trainer!

Vladimir Barsky
September 2011



The cover of Isaak Lipnitsky's original Russian version of the book *Questions of Modern Chess Theory*.

How to Study a Concrete Opening

Isaak Lipnitsky

Many chess players, wanting to learn a particular opening, mistakenly believe that it is necessary to *commit to memory* the mass of all possible variations. Certainly, every opening has many variations, but to attempt to *memorise* these would be, at the very least, absurd. The player who tries to memorise chess theory ends up just being able to recite the familiar phrases '...this is good, but that is bad', but what these phrases are based on remains a secret to him. As a result, swotting rarely brings many points at chess.

General principles and basic ideas

The worst thing is that the player begins to believe blindly in the infallibility of the lines he has learnt, thereby consciously limiting his creative thought. However, some players go to the other extreme, deciding hardly to study opening variations at all, and instead seek to play entirely by common sense, following the general rules and basic principles of the openings. Certainly, **understanding the general principles of the opening is of first importance**. However, it is obvious that a player who neglects the enormous experience, built up over decades, of games and variations, does himself a disservice. So what should we do? Memorising variations is bad, yet so is ignoring them.

One must understand that in the main, **opening variations are founded on general principles and strategic ideas. Therefore, in studying a concrete opening, it is extremely important to identify and understand its characteristic ideas.** The existence of numerous opening continuations only helps our work, with such an approach to studying the openings. This is because the more variations there are, the more deeply and comprehensively we will be able to study the basic characteristic ideas of that opening. In this way, the need to remember a large number of variations falls away of its own accord. Our memory will retain those lines, out of the multitude, which stand out, thanks to the high class of play, demonstrated by the two sides.

Which opening should we study?

After all, few people are able to study a large number of openings. Here one must rely on one's creative and stylistic preferences, one's individual tastes. One player strives for active piece play and sharp tactical fights. Another prefers a slow build-up of tension. A third may prefer complete clarity and a guarantee against surprises, etc. But once the choice is made, it is then essential to seek out everything interesting in the area of that particular opening. The main thing is to understand its basic ideas.

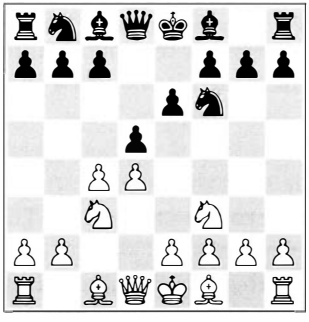
A great deal can be obtained from playing thematic games in the opening, followed by detailed analysis of those games. Individual analysis of the chosen opening is also very useful. Let us assume that a variation ends with an advantage for Black. It is vitally important

to work out why this happened, and **what is the position basis of this advantage**. How and why did it come about? Only by penetrating to the essence of the line can a player begin to understand chess and get away from superficial play.

A player who seriously and deeply studies one particular opening – in this case, the Ragozin Defence – develops within himself valuable skills, which are very useful for studying any other opening. We invite the reader first to become acquainted with the basic strategic and positional ideas of this defence, which obtained its name from the Soviet Grandmaster Viacheslav Vasilievich Ragozin.

In the Queen's Gambit, a widespread move-order is 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3, in which both white knights are developed before the emergence of the bishop from c1. With such a method of play, White seeks slightly to mask his intentions – he does not commit his queen's bishop at an early stage, and it may, if need be, go to g5, f4, e3 or d2.

1



In the position of diagram No 1, the main continuations for Black for many years involved the moves 4...♗e7 and 4...♘bd7. The move 4...♗b4 was harshly judged in chess literature and was extremely unpopular. The main objection to the move 4...♗b4 was the fact that it allows White, by means of 5.♕a4+, to force the reply 5...♘c6 and thereby block the black pawn on c7 with a piece. For many years, it was a cardinal principle of theory that in the Queen's Gambit, the black c-pawn should go to either c6 or c5. This view was based on the old, and rather simplistic view of the centre. This required that:

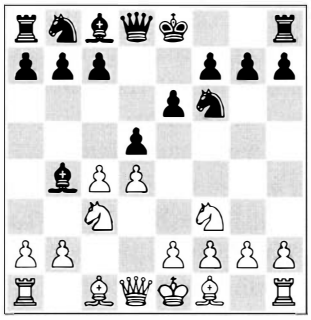
1) the pawn should go to c6, to defend the central d5 pawn solidly, or
2) Black should play ...c7-c5 to attack the white central pawn on d4.

With the development of the new view of the centre in chess, the importance of piece pressure on this highly important area of the board grew enormously. This slowly gave birth to new opening systems.

One of the first swallows of this new theoretical spring was the appearance in the Queen's Gambit of the Chigorin Defence 1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6. Chigorin deliberately blocked the path of the pawn at c7 with the knight, but in return, the knight on c6 exerts active pressure on the centre and supports the powerful central pawn thrust ...e7-e5. The Ragozin Defence, starting from the position reached after the moves 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 ♗b4, to a significant extent develops this idea of Chigorin. In 1936, Ragozin, in the book of the 1936 Moscow international tournament, wrote: 'Very often, when playing this "incorrect" defence, I aim to exploit the time gained for the battle in the centre. Black obtains a good game, if he can play ...e5.'

Let us look at the starting position of the Ragozin.

2



The black bishop is significantly more actively placed on b4 than on e7. The white knight on c3, as is well known, plays a large role in the fight for the central squares. By pinning this knight, Black takes the first step towards creating a tense struggle in the centre, from the very beginning of the opening. Black's striving for active counterplay from the earliest stage of the game, and an energetic fight for the initiative, flowing right from the actual development of the pieces, are typical themes which permeate many variations of the Ragozin Defence.

In his book *The 11th USSR Championship*, Botvinnik summed up this defence as follows: 'With this method of playing the opening, i.e. rejecting symmetry and striving for counterplay, the advantage of the first move becomes less noticeable. This is how modern players play when Black.'

Some history. The Nimzo-Indian Defence and other systems

As we have already said, the move 4...♗b4 was rarely seen in older tournament practice. It is only in the games of Ragozin that we see this move used systematically, in conjunction with the move of the b8 knight to c6. These games were played in the 1930s, in Leningrad tournaments, and also in the IX USSR Championship and the 1935 and 1936 Moscow internationals, and other events. Usually in these games, Ragozin used the move-order 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4.

Parallel with this, in the Nimzo-Indian Defence, after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 Ragozin used to answer 4.♕c2 (or 4.♕b3) with the move 4...♘c6 and after 5.♘f3 he continued 5...d5. Annotating his game against Capablanca from the 1936 Moscow international, after the moves 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 ♘c6 he wrote that the move 4...♘c6 was introduced by him in Soviet tournaments after 1932 and aims at the most rapid possible development, whilst preparing the central blow by means of ...e6-e5.

In this way, on the one hand the Ragozin System in the Nimzo-Indian appeared, whilst on the other hand, the same player regularly used the move ...♗f8-b4 in the Queen's Gambit, aiming to prepare and carry out the same plan with the advance ...e6-e5. Gradually, this move-order attracted more and more adherents, including leading Soviet players, such as Botvinnik, Smyslov, Keres, Kotov, Romanovsky and Averbakh, who all used the system in important games. The combined efforts of Soviet players in this new opening produced many new variations and ideas. The whole system led to a new opening formation, known by the name of the Ragozin Defence. And, finally, the theory of the opening was created.

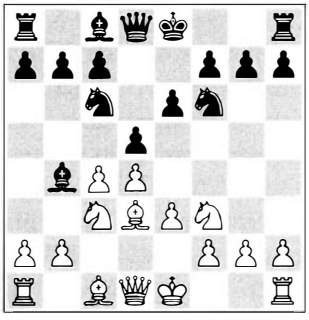
The Ragozin is often confused with the Nimzo-Indian, due to the similarity in the set-ups of both defences. There is

nothing surprising in this, especially if one bears in mind that many of the lines in the Ragozin started out from the Nimzo-Indian. Since many of the lines can be reached via either opening, the question sometimes arises as to what should be regarded as a Nimzo-Indian and what as a Ragozin. Here are two positions.

3



4



It is easy to see that they can arise from both openings.

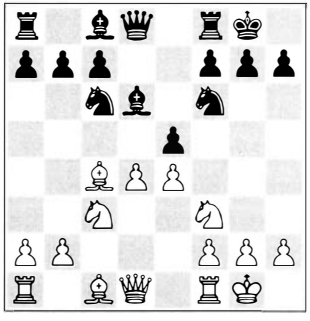
In contemporary opening play, one can frequently see cases of transpositions from one opening to another. Even such dissimilar openings as the Spanish and the Sicilian can reach identical positions, for example: 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗b5+ ♘c6 4.0-0 ♗d7 5.c3 a6 6.♗a4 ♘f6 7.♖e1 e5 8.d4 b5 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♗c2 ♗e7 11.♘bd2 ♕c7 12.♘f1 ♖d8.

The Ragozin Defence can in many variations arise not only from the Nimzo-Indian, but also from various systems of the Queen's Gambit. It effectively lies on the edge of a whole host of Queen's Gambit systems. However, in such similar positions, the important thing for us is not the naming of the opening, but the similarity in the content of the resulting positions.

The central idea: the advance ...e6-e5

One of the main ideas of the Ragozin Defence is the preparation and carrying out of the central pawn blow ...e6-e5. At the heart of this advance of the black e-pawn there lies a deep idea. Black prepares to take active measures against the enemy centre, whilst in the process opening lines for his bishops. After ...e6-e5, it is often possible to go over to a direct attack on the white king. At the same time, Black solves the problem of freeing his bishop on c8, which, as is well known, in many lines of the Queen's Gambit ends up as a prisoner in his own camp.

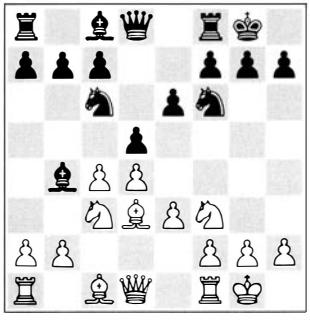
5



In diagram No. 5, Black's pieces are harmoniously and purposefully placed. Both bishops are pointed at the white kingside and tension has been set up in the centre. In order to achieve this set-up, bearing in mind that the advance ...e6-e5 seriously weakens the pawn on d5, Black has resorted to a ma-

noeuvre which it is important to note – he has exchanged his d5 pawn for the white pawn on c4, and has then retreated his bishop from b4 to the long-prepared station on d6. Finally, he has advanced his pawn with ...e6-e5. Here, one must immediately pay attention to an important factor. By exchanging the d5 pawn for the enemy pawn on c4, Black has given his opponent a central pawn majority and has voluntarily given up his important central outpost, which held back the opponent's pawn advance e3-e4. This means that Black has committed an important weakening of his central pawn position. But he has done so intentionally: by his immediate attack on the enemy centre, he aims to neutralise the opponent's advantage in this crucial sector of the board.

6



In the position of diagram No. 6 Black has a solid and lasting strong-point in the centre.

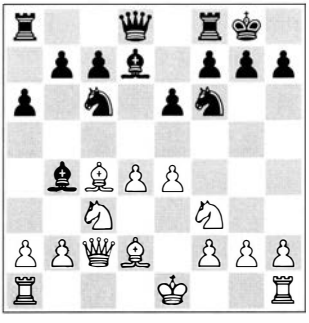
7



In the position of diagram No. 7, Black has liquidated his central pawn outpost, giving the function of fighting in the centre mainly to his pieces instead. A natural question arises: why was it necessary first to give the opponent a superiority in the centre, if the very first task after that is to neutralise this advantage? The answer to this can be divided into two parts.

Black, having exchanged a passive central stance for an active one, has immediate created a tense situation. And creating tension in the centre is one of a chess player's main tasks, if he is striving to win. This is the general plan. Black frees his light-squared bishop, and opens lines for his pieces, pointing them ready for an attack on the white kingside. This is the concrete plan. The transitional moment, from a passive stance to active counterplay in the centre, deserves special attention. It is no coincidence that this is the moment when we often see errors and mistakes, even in the games of very strong players. These mistakes often occur because, having conceded his central outpost (d5xc4), Black dawdles over the active advance ...e6-e5. This allows White to strengthen and defend his position in the centre, achieving a large advantage (diagram No. 8).

8



What ideas does White have to deal with the black idea of advancing

...e6-e5? We can immediately show two such ideas.

A) White tries to prevent the advance ...e6-e5.

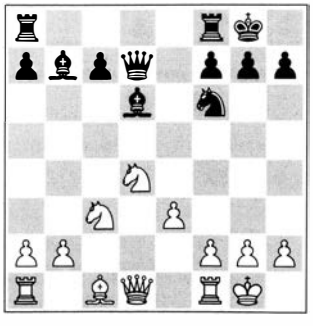
To do this, he attacks the knight on c6 (diagram No. 9).

9



If Black allows himself to be intimidated and plays, for example, 9...♗d7, then by means of 10.e4! White can take up a strong position in the centre, and then the reply 10...e5 turns out to be impossible because of the loss of a piece after 11.♗xc6. In order to avoid being forced into 'deep' defence, Black, in the position of diagram No. 9, can offer an interesting gambit with 9...e5!. After the moves 10.♗xc6 exd4 11.♗xb7 ♗xb7 12.♘xd4 ♕d7 (diagram No. 10), at the cost of a pawn, Black has seized the initiative from his opponent, although this does not have to be devoted purely to thoughts of attacking the enemy kingside.

10

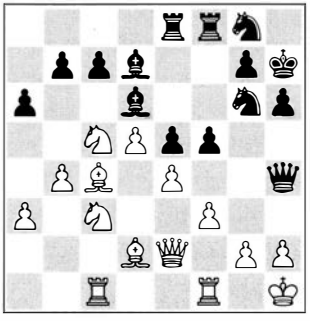


B) White chooses to allow the advance ...e6-e5.

In this case, the further course of the game can follow one of three directions:

1. White advances his d-pawn beyond the demarcation line and closes the position in the centre. Play then takes place on the flanks. White tries to create pressure on the queenside, where he has an open file. This is not so simple, but if Black plays passively, it can sometimes be achieved, as seen in diagram No. 11.

11



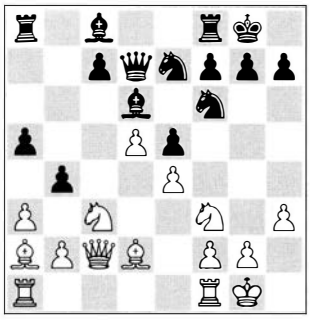
In the blocked position, Black as a rule develops his counterplay on the kingside (diagram No. 12).

12



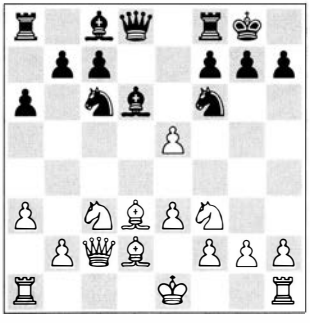
However, in some cases, Black even manages to upset his opponent on the queenside (diagram No. 13, next page).

13



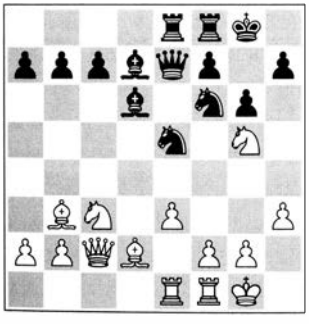
2. White exchanges pawns on e5, trying to achieve a superiority in the centre by advancing his e- and f-pawns.

14



In a case such as that shown in diagram No. 14, only the recapture with the bishop on e5 allows Black to equalise, since the stereotyped 12...♘xe5 leads after 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.0-0-0 to a difficult position, because of the threat of the white advance of the e- and f-pawns.

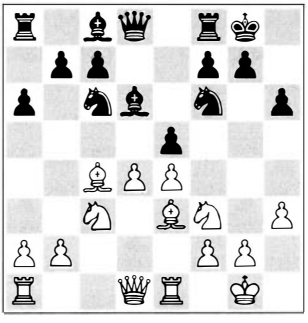
15



In the position of diagram No. 15, Black very accurately carried out the counter advance of his c-pawn and in a sharp battle, answered White's pressure in the centre. There followed 15...c5! 16.f4! c4! 17.fxe5 ♕xe5 18.♘f3 cxb3 19.♘xe5 bxc2 20.♘xd7 ♘xd7.

3. The most complicated play arises in those cases, when after ...e6-e5, the tension in the centre is not only not removed, but is augmented. White aims to bring more pieces to bear on the centre, hoping to overwhelm his opponent in that sector. Black has a serious threat permanently hanging over him: a rapid advance of the white e- and f-pawns, after a preliminary double exchange on e5. This requires special alertness from Black.

16



In the position of diagram No. 16, Black did not find the plan of a flank counter-attack by means of 12...b5! 13.♗b3 ♗b7 14.d5 ♘a5 15.♗c2 ♘c4, instead continuing 12...♗d7? 13.♕c2 ♖e8 14.a3 exd4 15.♘xd4 ♘e5.

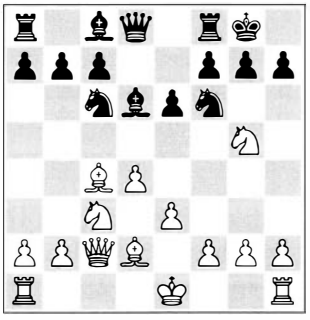
17



This allowed White, in the position of diagram No. 17, by means of 16.♗f1! ♘g6 17.♖ad1 ♕e7 18.g3! ♘xe4 19.♗c1 f5 20.♗g2 ♘e5 21.♘xf5 ♗xf5 22.♘xe4, to break his opponent's resistance in the centre and achieve a significant advantage.

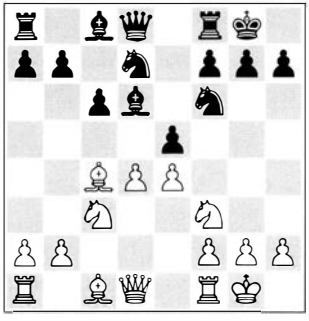
The following idea is extremely interesting.
White takes his knight from f3 to g5, creating a threat against the enemy kingside. Later, this knight transfers to the central square e4, from where it exerts pressure on the opponent's position (diagram No. 18). Black can fight against this knight jump by defending the square g5 in advance, by means of ...h7-h6, and also by means of active counter-measures on the other flank (...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5).

18



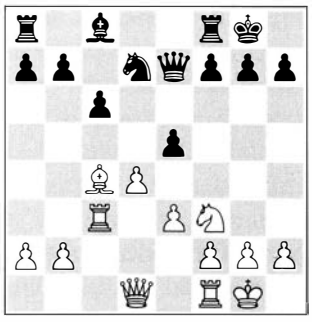
We should draw attention to one highly significant circumstance: when White starts to concentrate almost all of his forces in the centre, preparing a general battle there, Black should rapidly go over to a counterattack on the queenside, so as to divert White's attention and distract some of his forces from the centre. In the majority of cases, it is very useful for Black to play the move ...a7-a6. This move protects the square b5 against jumps by the white pieces, and, most important of all, it is essential for the counterattack on the queenside.
With the advance ...e6-e5 achieved, the move ...♗c8-d7 rather than ...a7-a6 is not good. The black light-squared bishop is best placed on c8, from where it can, in case of necessity, go to b7. On the other hand, the move ...♗c8-d7 can be very useful, as part of a light-square strategy by Black (see below).
The central ideas in the Ragozin that we have looked at are very reminiscent of similar ideas in the Queen's Gambit. Here are two examples.
In diagram No. 19, we see the Chigorin set-up in one of the variations of the Queen's Gambit. This set-up is also associated with pressure against the white king.

19



This position arises after the moves 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e3 ♘f6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7 6.♗d3 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 dxc4 9.♗xc4 e5. We can point out the game Janowski-Chigorin (Budapest 1896), where the great Russian player employed this idea.
In diagram No. 20 the so-called Capablanca simplifying system has been played, arising after the moves 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.♖c1 c6 8.♗d3 dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♘d5 10.♗xe7 ♕xe7 11.0-0 ♘xc3 12.♖xc3 e5.

20



However, in both of these last two examples, the black queen's knight is much less well placed than in the Ragozin Defence: it does not take part in the attack on the centre and it blocks in its own bishop.

In many variations of the Ragozin Defence, as a result of repeatedly moving the same pieces, White falls behind in the development of his pieces. As a result of this, and his own rapid mobilisation, Black obtains a temporary superiority in force at the 'central front'. In order to exploit this advantage before his opponent can bring up the reserves, Black does not shy away from sacrificial play to force an immediate breakthrough in the centre, trying to open lines and attack the white king.

As the reader will easily understand, these breakthroughs start with the move ...e6-e5 (see diagram No. 21).

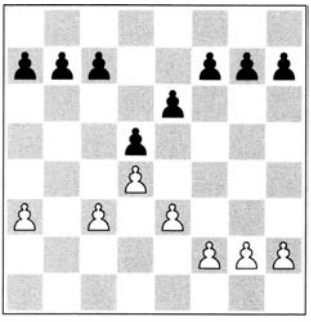
21



The light-square strategy

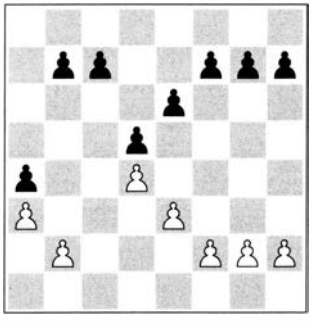
Often, as the battle develops, the white central and queenside pawns end up on dark squares, as shown in diagrams Nos. 22 and 23. It is easy to see that in such a structure, White has very weak light squares, especially a4, b3 and c4.

22



Whenever one side ends up with a whole complex of weak squares of one colour, then it is always desirable for the opponent to try to exploit this, by means of piece pressure on the squares concerned. In such cases, we speak of play against squares of a certain colour.

23



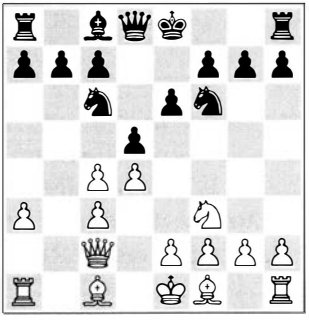
In the Ragozin Defence, it is very characteristic to see plans involving Black playing against the weakened light squares in the opponent's camp. But how can these weakened light squares be exploited? What are the basic ideas used by Black in his light-square strategy?

We can identify two such ideas:

1. Black tries at all costs to fix the enemy central and queenside pawns on dark squares. To do so, he creates additional attacks with his pieces and pawns against the white squares, preventing the enemy pawns advancing to these squares.

2. So as to turn these weakened squares into an 'incurable weakness', Black tries to exchange off the enemy light-squared bishop, i.e. the very piece which is best suited to the defence of these weakened light squares.

24



In the position of diagram No. 24, with the move 7...♘a5! Black, by trying to force the exchange c4xd5, begins the fight over the weakened light squares in the enemy camp. White resists by playing 8.♘e5, but the move 8...♘d7! forces the exchange on d5: 9.♘xd7 ♗xd7 10.cxd5 exd5. The first part of Black's plan is completed: the square c4 has been weakened significantly. After 11.♗f4 Black, by means of 11...♗b5!!, tries to achieve his second idea – the exchange of light-squared bishops. Certainly, in the event of 12.e3 ♗xf1 13.♔xf1 White's position is strategically lost. The easiest way for Black to exploit his advantage is to play ♕d7, ♖ac8 and ...c7-c5!, planning later to penetrate along the c-file. White is helpless, as it is extremely difficult for him to create any sort of counterplay. His dark-squared bishop can hardly take any part in the defence at all.

The successful implementation of the light-square strategy frequently gives Black a definite advantage. But even so, there is a big difference between an advantage and a win. How should we try to bridge this gap? The mere occupation of the weakened squares by itself is hardly likely to bring success.

The creation of a complex of weak light squares in the enemy camp is so important for Black, because it allows him to:

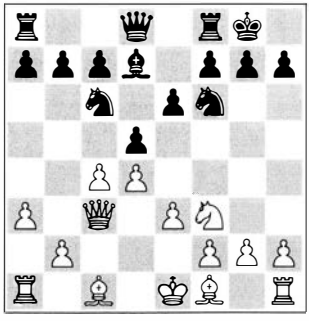
A) first place White in a passive position, making it difficult for him to obtain any effective counterplay;

B) and this then allows him to organise a planned breakthrough to the enemy position.

Therefore, in those cases where Black has successfully implemented the light-square strategy, he should immediately seek to achieve the break ...c7-c5 or ...e6-e5, so as to break into the opponent's position. By means of this breakthrough, Black wants to increase still further the advantage that his light-square strategy has brought him.

We have seen how Black can try to seize the light squares with the manoeuvre ...♘c6-a5.

25



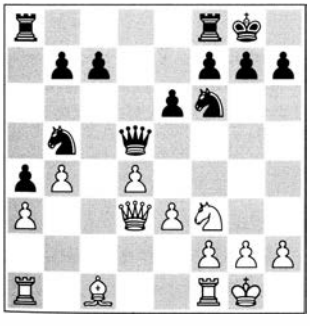
Now let us familiarise ourselves with some other devices in the light-square strategy. In the position of diagram No. 25, Black's last move was 8...♗c8-d7. A superficial glance at the position may make one think that Black is simply developing a piece. In reality, though, this move is an important element in a deeply thought-out black plan to fight for the light squares. Let us make the further moves 9.♗d3 a5 10.b3. White wishes to prevent the fixing of his queenside, which was threatened by the further advance of the black a-pawn. But now there follows 10...a4! and after 11.b4 – 11...dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♘a7! (diagram No. 26).

26



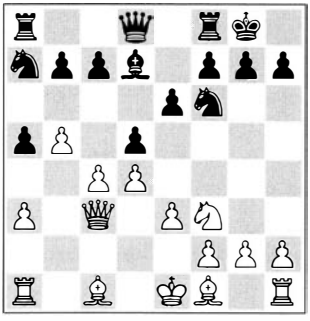
13.0-0 ♗b5! Black exchanges the light-squared bishops: 14.♗xb5 ♘xb5 15.♕d3 ♕d5! (see diagram No. 27), finally blockading White on the light squares.

27



In reply to Black's eighth move 8...♗d7, White seems at first sight to have the powerful reply 9.b4, but it turns out that Black is excellently prepared to make a counter-blow on the queenside. He continues 9...a5! 10.b5 ♘a7! (diagram No. 28).

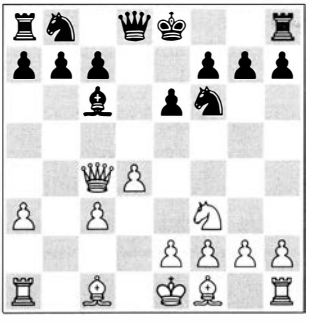
28



It turns out that White cannot advance his c-pawn any further, whilst after 11.a4 there follows 11...c6!, after which his pawn chain collapses on the light squares.

The idea of playing on the light squares is also illustrated by the variation 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 ♗b4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 dxc4! 7.♕a4+ ♗d7 8.♕xc4 ♗c6 (diagram No. 29).

29



Finally, one more example. The strength of the light-square strategy is so great that Black is even ready to sacrifice a pawn to implement it (diagram No. 30):

30

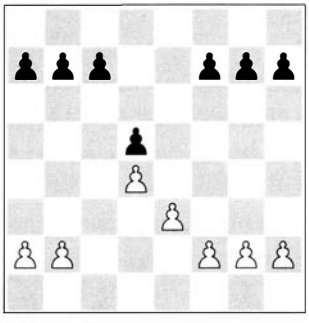


So, the idea of a light-square strategy is extremely typical of the Ragozin Defence, and runs like a thread through a great many of its variations.

A flank attack by the pawn majority

As a result of the pawn exchange c4xd5 e6xd5, Black obtains a pawn majority on the queenside, with a stable central position, whilst White has a majority on the kingside (diagram No. 31).

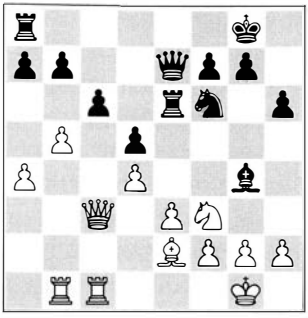
31



As in various lines of the Queen's Gambit, Black can strengthen his central pawn on d5 with the neighbouring pawn on c6. In this case, Black should seek to exploit the open lines on the kingside for a piece attack on the white king. In response to this, White usually carries out the minority attack with his queenside pawns.

As seen in diagram No. 32 (right), White attacks the three enemy queenside pawns with his own two.

32



What is the sense of this attack? Clearly, it is not aiming at creating a passed pawn. The aim is to create pawn weaknesses in the opponent's position, either on d5 and c6 or d5 and b7, and then later to organise pressure against these weaknesses. Practice shows that White's attack in such positions usually works better than Black's attack on the kingside. Even with accurate play, Black in the majority of cases does not manage more than a draw. This whole scheme is typical of the so-called Exchange Variation of the Queen's Gambit.

A different set-up is typical in the Ragozin, however: both sides attack where they have a majority of pawns.

33

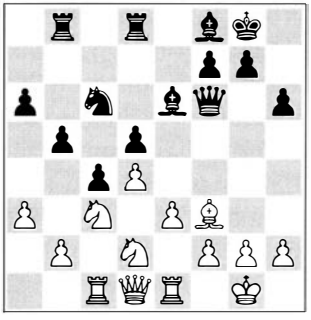


For Black, the aim of such an attack is to create a passed pawn on the queenside, or to organise a breakthrough with his heavy pieces, into the opposing posi-

tion. White's task on the kingside is a direct piece and pawn attack on the black king. If the chance arises, White utilises his extra pawn in the centre for the advance e3-e4.

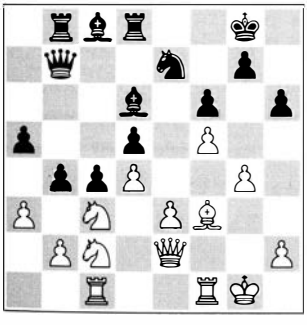
In the position of diagram No. 33, Black has set out his plan of an attack on the queenside. An important role in this plan is played by the move ...♖f8-d8. Black strengthens his d5 pawn in advance, and prevents White's central break (e3-e4). Four moves later, the game had reached the following position.

34



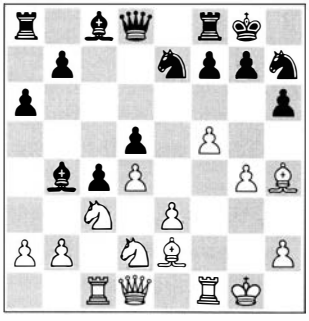
Black's pieces enjoy a remarkable degree of harmony. All of his pieces are directed towards an attack on the queenside. It is hard for White to organise counterplay in the centre or on the kingside, and he faces a long and prospectless defence.

35



In the position of diagram No. 35, Black has again placed his forces as in the previous example, but White, understanding that passive play will lead him into trouble, has carried out a counter-offensive on the kingside and in the centre. Black has manoeuvred unsuccessfully in this case, and White was now able to demolish Black's position by means of 22.♘xd5! ♘xd5 23.♕xc4.

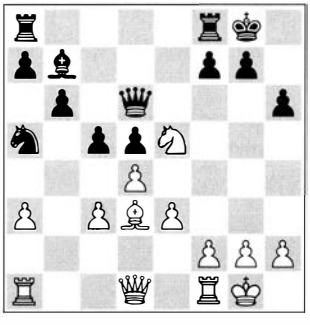
36



This was possible because Black revealed his plans on the queenside very early. White, knowing the basic ideas of the defence, was able to adopt an attacking set-up on the kingside in the course of developing his pieces.

Familiarity with the basic strategic ideas makes it significantly easier to carry out one's concrete plans. Imagine we are faced with the position in diagram No. 37.

37



Knowing the basic ideas of such positions significantly eases our further

work. White faces a question: how can he attack concretely on the kingside? After all, the position allows several different answers to this question. Probably, it is obvious that useful attacking moves include ♕d1-h5, f2-f4 and the bringing of the rook into the attack via f3. Or g2-g4-g5, so as to exploit the position of the pawn on h6 to open up the black king. It is possible either to play ♕h5 followed by g2-g4-g5, or g2-g4, and then ♔h1, ♖g1 and g4-g5. The storm with both pawns by f2-f4 and g2-g4 also looks good.

As we see, White has a large choice of possible ways to play. It is clear that, in choosing one concrete line, a crucial factor will be the speed and effectiveness of the attack, taking serious account of the opponent's counter-measures.

So what does Black's counterplay consist of? How will he attack? It seems as though the plan of creating a passed pawn on the queenside by means of the pawn advance ...c5-c4, ...b6-b5, ...a7-a5 and ...b5-b4, is rather slow, in the face of White's attack on the kingside. This leads us to more active measures. These consist in Black doubling rooks on the c-file, so as to exchange pawns on d4 and then break through into White's position.

So, we are now familiar with three basic strategic and positional ideas in the Ragozin Defence:

1) The central idea – achieving ...e6-e5;
2) The light-square strategy;
3) An attack by the pawn majority on the queenside, with a corresponding attack on the kingside by White.

These ideas can be considered fundamental to the Ragozin Defence, since they are characteristic of most of its different variations. We will meet many of the other ideas of this opening in what follows, as we delve into specific variations. Here, though, we should pay attention to two points. In many variations, White, by playing ♗c1-g5, pins the black knight on f6. This pin is unpleasant for Black, since his bishop is either on b4, or is exchanged off on c3. However, Black has a radical means of removing the pin. He plays ...h7-h6!, forcing White to exchange on f6, since refusing this exchange by means of ♗g5-h4 would allow Black, in the great majority of cases, to take the initiative with ...g7-g5 and ...♘f6-e4.

Another point is that Black is frequently quicker in bringing his pieces into play, as a result of White spending tempi on queen moves, or the moves a2-a3 or ♘f3-e5, etc. Black obtains a local superiority of forces in a certain area of the board. In such situations, he tries at all costs to prevent the normal mobilisation of his opponent's pieces, and seeks a possibility of going over to a direct attack, often using for this purpose one of the three basic ideas of this defence, which we have examined above.

Chapter One

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+

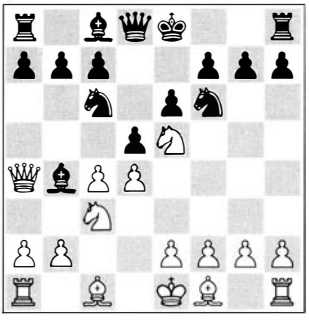


We have already spoken of how this queen check, forcing the opponent to play ♘c6 and in the process to obstruct his pawn on c7, was for a long time considered to be the demonstration of the incorrectness of the entire black set-up. Later, thanks to the efforts primarily of Viacheslav Ragozin, it was established that this plan is not so terrible for Black; no sort of *blitzkrieg* is about to happen, and the queen often proves to be unstably placed on a4. Chess players go from one extreme to the other, and in the 1960s, this move was practically never seen.

But gradually, passions cooled and emotions calmed down, and the queen check began again to have its adherents. For example, it has been played a good deal by such strong players and theoreticians as Michal Krasenkow and Vadim Malakhatko. In recent years, when the main line 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 has attracted too much theoretical development, interest in the move 5.♕a4+ has grown. This system has been seen in tournaments of the very highest level, and has been played, for example, by Magnus Carlsen, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Ruslan Ponomariov, and Hikaru Nakamura. History develops in spirals, and it is not impossible that in the near future, this line could become the epicentre of Ragozin theory.

Game 1
Freiman,Sergey
Ragozin,Viacheslav
Leningrad 1934

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♘f6 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♘e5



First of all, we should check out this active knight jump – can we just refute the black set-up at once, winning a piece or pawn, or at least obtaining the bishop pair 'free of charge'? But in reality, this move leads, in the main, to a loss of time, and allows Black to seize the initiative.

6...♗d7

At first, this move was played almost automatically, but then Black began to think whether he had any reliable alternatives. The attempt to go over to a counterattack at once with **6...♘e4?** turns insufficient because of the simple **7.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♕d7**



Analysis diagram

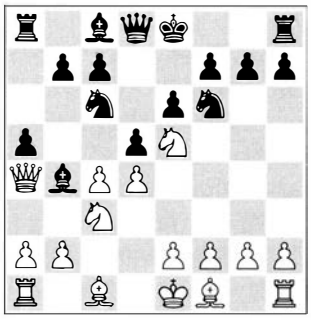
Thanks to this pin, Black regains his piece, but by exploiting the unstable position of the knight on e4, White takes the initiative in the centre:

9.f3! **♘f6** 9...♘xc3? loses after 10.♕b4. **10.cxd5 exd5** (Scalcione-Roberti, Salsomaggiore 2005) **11.e4! dxe4** 11...♕xc6? 12.♗b5; 11...bxc6 12.e5±. **12.♗b5 a6 13.0-0 axb5** 13...0-0 14.♗a3+−. **14.♕xa8** White has an extra exchange, without any particular compensation.

It seems too submissive to play **6...♗xc3+?! 7.bxc3 ♗d7 8.♘xd7 ♕xd7** Black exchanges his bishops for knights one after the other, but what does he get in return? **9.cxd5** Also not bad is 9.♗a3 ♘e7 10.♕b4 b6 11.e3 a5, Krasnikov-Chaschin, Novosibirsk 2007, 12.♕b3±. **9...exd5 10.♖b1 b6 11.e3 ♘a5 12.♕xd7+ ♔xd7** (Hamilton-Mills, Exmouth 2009) **13.f3**±.

The battle assumes a similar character after: **6...0-0?! 7.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 bxc6** He has to weaken his pawns, since after 8...♕d7? there is the nice blow 9.♘e7+! ♕xe7 10.♗a3 ♕e8 11.♕b3± Camara-Alves, Rio de Janeiro 1974, and White keeps an extra exchange. **9.e3 ♘e4 10.♗d3 f5** The exchange of the pawn on c3 for that on d5 is even less appealing for Black: 10...♘xc3 11.♕c2 ♘e4 12.♗xe4 dxe4 13.♕xe4±. **11.0-0** Also good is 11.♕xc6 ♗d7 12.♕a6 ♖f6, Engel-Opocensky, Sliac 1932, 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♕a5±. **11...♘xc3 12.♕xc6 ♗d7 13.♕a6 ♖f6** (Henley-Rohde, Lone Pine 1977), and here White could have achieved an advantage by **14.cxd5** **♘xd5** (14...exd5 15.♕a5±) **15.♖b1 ♗e8 16.♗a3**±;

Even so, Black does have at his disposal an interesting resource, which in my view remains under-estimated: **6...a5!?**



Analysis diagram

Black is prepared to give up a pawn, for the sake of seizing the initiative on the queenside.

A) His main idea is revealed in the variation **7.♘xc6 bxc6** and now:

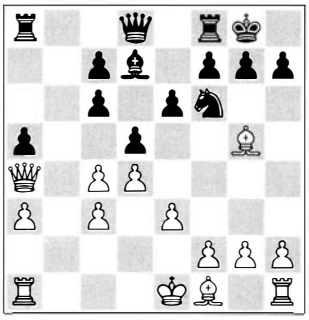
A1) Greed is severely punished: **8.♕xc6+? ♗d7 9.♕b7 ♘e4 10.♗f4** After 10.♗d2 ♘d6 White loses his queen. **10...♘xc3 11.a3 ♖b8 12.♗xc7** Nor does he save himself by 12.♕a6 ♖b6 13.♕a7 ♘b5+. **12...♘b5+ 13.axb4 ♘xc7** with a decisive advantage;

A2) But possible is **8.cxd5** exd5 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♗d7 11.♕c2 0-0 with mutual chances;

A3) **8.a3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 0-0 10.♕xc6?!** Better is 10.♗f4 ♗d7 11.♕c2 c5⇄. **10...♗d7 11.♕b7 ♘e4** and Black has excellent compensation for the pawn;

B) Black is also fine after **7.♗g5 0-0 8.e3** (Fedorov-Akchelov, Novokuznetsk 1998) **8...♘xe5! 9.dxe5 ♕d7!** Note this 'feint', with the help of which Black escapes from the pin; yet again, he shows that the position of the white queen on a4 is not ideal. **10.♕xd7 ♘xd7 11.f4 ♘b6∓**;

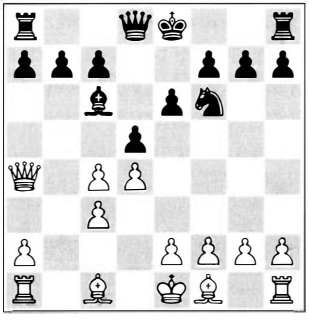
C) I believe the critical position for this variation arises after **7.a3 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 0-0 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♗g5** Here too, taking the pawn is not recommended: 10.♕xc6? ♗d7 11.♕b7 ♘e4! 12.♕b2 ♗a4∓. **10...♗d7 11.e3**.



Analysis diagram

In the game Zozek-Zhou Weiqi, Al Ain 2008, Black obtained the advantage after 11...♕b8 12.♗d3? ♕b2! 13.0-0 ♕xc3 14.♗xf6 ♕xd3 15.♗e5 ♖fb8 16.cxd5 exd5 17.♗xc7 ♖b7∓, but 12.♕c2± was better. However, Black's play can also be strengthened: 11...c5!? (instead of 11...♕b8) 12.♗xf6 ♗xa4 13.♗xd8 ♖fxd8 14.cxd5 exd5 15.dxc5 ♖db8 16.♗e2 ♖b2 17.♗f3 c6 18.0-0 ♗c2≅.

7.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♗xc6



'White loses precious tempi and allows the opponent to outstrip him in development. Not surprisingly, after just eight moves, White must expend considerable energy and effort, just to equalise' – Lipnitsky.

At first glance, this assessment may seem extremely categorical, since, at the end of the day, White does have the advantage of the two bishops and a whole armada of central pawns. Yes, he is behind in development, but he has no weaknesses, and so there is nothing for Black to attack. Or is there?

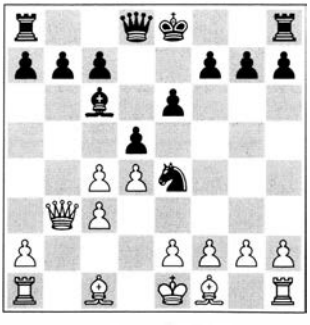
9.♕b3

The alternatives 9.♕c2 and 9.♕a3 with be examined later.

9...dxc4

'After this move, the bishop dominates along the long diagonal. Black's last move also pursued another aim – to seize the light squares in the centre and on the queenside' – Lipnitsky.

This logical move continues to be the main line to this day. Certainly, it makes sense to open the long diagonal as soon as possible, and not to risk allowing c4-c5 at some point and being left with a dead bishop. However, there are also other interesting possibilities. For example, Rybka very much likes the immediate knight jump **9...♘e4**. Black keeps the exchange on c4 in reserve and it turns out that it is not easy for White to defuse the situation.



Analysis diagram

For example:

A) **10.e3? ♕h4** Such a primitive threat, yet, strangely, White has no convenient defence. **11.♕c2** (Stoltz-Katetov, Prague 1946). The alternative is to play without castling after 11.g3 ♕f6 12.♕c2 ♕f3 13.♖g1 dxc4 14.♗g2 ♕f5∓ or 14.♗xc4 0-0∓. **11...dxc4!? 12.g3** 12.♗xc4?! ♘d6 13.♗f1 0-0∓, and it is hard for White to complete the development of his kingside. **12...♕h5 13.♗g2 f5 14.0-0 0-0 15.f3 ♘d6** – it is difficult for White to advance e3-e4 and take the initiative in the centre, and this means that he does not have sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn;

B) **10.c5** (Tocchioni-Mazzini, Lucca 2008) **10...b6!** Black opens play on the queenside, after which his bishop and rook will both have plenty of work. **11.cxb6 axb6 12.g3 ♕d7 13.♗g2 0-0 14.0-0 ♖a4∓** Black has firmly seized the initiative. His plans include doubling rooks on the a-file and transferring his knight to c4;

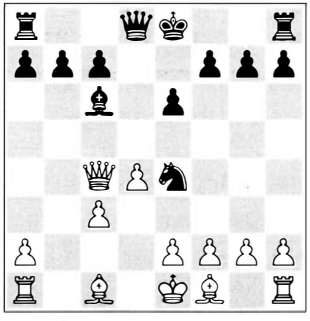
C) **10.cxd5 ♗xd5 11.♕b5+ c6!?** Also good is 11...♗c6 12.♕b2 0-0, after which we reach much the same situation as in the game Freiman-Ragozin. **12.♕xb7 ♘xc3 13.f3?!** If White manages to get in e2-e4, then of course, he will become master of the position, but this plan cannot be realised. Therefore, he should settle for the modest 13.e3. **13...c5!∓**.

10.♕xc4 ♘e4!

'An extremely strong move, underlining Black's positional advantage, which could rapidly diffuse after the routine **10...0-0**. In this case, White could consolidate his position by means of **11.♗g5!**' – Lipnitsky.

Subsequent practice has confirmed this conclusion: **11...h6 12.♗h4** 12.♗xf6 ♕xf6 13.f3 ♕g5. **12...♕e7 13.f3 e5 14.d5?** An interesting tactical oversight. After 14.♗xf6?! ♕xf6 15.d5 ♗d7 16.e4 c6! Black seizes the initiative, thanks to his lead in development, but correct was 14.e4 exd4 15.cxd4. Here Black can play 15...a6!? with the idea after ...♗b5 to exchange light-squared bishops but it is obvious that he faces a battle for equality. **14...♗d7?** (Gunawan-Brkljaca, Belgrade 1988). The mistake remains unpunished, whereas after 14...♗xd5 15.♗xf6 Black has the strong intermediate move 15...♕e6!, removing the queen from attack and defending his bishop. On the next move, Black will take the bishop on f6 and keep an extra pawn.

We would add that instead of 11.♗g5, it is possible that **11.f3** is even stronger, immediately taking control of the important square e4 and closing the long diagonal.



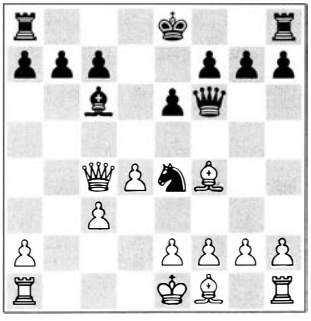
11.♗e3

White would like to kick the knight with 12.f3, after which the sacrifice 12...♕h4+ 13.g3 ♘xg3? fails because of 14.♗f2, and then put the bishop on f2, advance e2-e4 and then complete his kingside development. But this plan is only good on paper; it requires a lot of tempi, and Black utilises this time to create strong counterplay in the centre and on the kingside.

Let us look at White's other possibilities.

Obviously, **11.f3?** ♕h4+ or **11.♗a3?** ♕f6 12.f3 ♕h4+ are just bad for him, whilst **11.e3?** ♕h4 12.♕e2 e5 is not much better.

After **11.♗f4 ♕f6!** White also has nothing better than to retreat the bishop to e3:



Analysis diagram

12.♗e3 12.e3 ♘xf2 13.♔xf2 g5∓; 12.♗g3 ♕h6! (a double attack, threatening mate on d2 and also forcing White to take back on g3 with the f-pawn, leaving a weakness on e3) 13.♕d3 0-0 14.e3 ♘xg3 15.fxg3 e5. With material equality, Black has a very strong initiative, thanks to his advantage in development (Bennett-Palac, Geneva 1993). The game did not continue very long: 16.d5 e4 17.♕d4 ♗xd5 18.♕xd5 ♕xe3+ 19.♗e2 ♕xc3+ 20.♔f2 e3+ 21.♔f3 ♕f6+ 22.♔g4 ♖ad8 23.♕h5 g6 24.♕h6 ♕f5+ 25.♔h4 ♖d4+, and White resigned. **12...♕h4 13.h3 0-0 14.♖g1** (Shevelev-Mitkov, Paris 1993) 14.g3? ♘xg3 15.fxg3 ♕e4!∓. **14...♘d6 15.♕c5 ♖fe8∓**.

11...0-0

Perhaps 11...♕h4 was even stronger, and then after 12.h3 0-0 we have transposed into the aforementioned game Shevelev-Mitkov.

12.f3 ♘d6 13.♕d3

The character of the struggle is not greatly changed by 13.♕b3 ♗d5 14.♕c2 f5 15.♗f4 c5 (a 'temperamental' move. This advance should have been prepared: 15...♖c8 16.e3 c5 with the initiative) 16.dxc5 ♘c4 17.e3 ♕h4+ 18.g3 ♕h5 19.♗xc4 ♗xc4⩲ Domogaev-R. Bagirov, Tula 2007.

13...♗b5 14.♕c2



14...e5

Lipnitsky awards this move an exclamation mark and writes: 'Black undertakes energetic measures to open the game, following the principle that in an open position, it is easier to exploit a lead in development'...

One has the impression that in the pre-computer era, people were happier about giving up material and often overrated the significance of the initiative. Since those days, defensive tenacity has grown greatly. Certainly, it is easier to exploit a lead in development in an open position, but this opening should have been prepared, by playing 14...♕f6!. In this case, it would have been rather more difficult for White to defend.

15.dxe5 ♘c4 16.♗f4

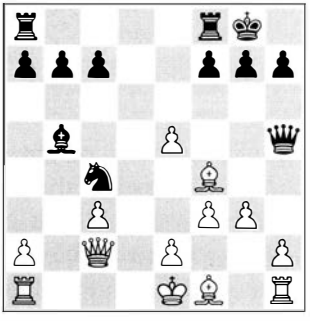
The only reply, but sufficient. On 16.♗d4 unpleasant is 16...♖c8 with the idea of ...c7-c5.

16...♕h4+ 17.g3

Again the right decision. After 17.♗g3 ♕h6 18.♕c1 (not 18.e4? ♘e3) 18...♕c6 19.e4 ♖ae8 20.♗e2 ♘xe5 Black retains some initiative.

17...♕h5

This 'active' move is not good, although its refutation lies beneath the surface. Black should have accepted that his opening initiative has fizzled out somewhat and gone over to fighting for a draw: 17...♕e7 18.♕b3 (18.e4 ♕c5! 19.♕b3 a5!? – it is hard for White to evacuate his king from the centre and complete his development) 18...♗a6 (18...♕c5 19.♕b4⩱) 19.e4 ♘xe5 20.♗xa6 bxa6 21.♗xe5 ♕xe5 22.0-0 – Black has regained his pawn, but he cannot count on any sort of advantage, and maintaining equality is his maximum hope.



18.♗g2?!

White continues to regard himself as the weaker side and plays accordingly. However, he had at his disposal the unusual lunge 18.h4!, underlining the unfortunate position of the queen on h5. Then practically forcing play begins: 18...♘xe5 (18...f6 19.♕b3 ♗a6 20.e3 ♕f7 21.exf6±) 19.g4 ♕g6 (livelier is 19...♘xg4!?, but after 20.fxg4 ♕xg4 21.e3 ♗xf1 22.♔xf1 Black has a cheerless position) 20.♕xg6 ♘xg6 21.♗xc7 ♖ac8 22.♗d6 ♖fd8 23.♗b4±. Probably Black can draw, thanks to the activity of his pieces, but no more than that.

18...♘xe5 19.0-0

19.g4 gives White nothing because of 19...♕h4+ 20.♗g3 ♕e7 21.♕e4 ♖fe8∓.

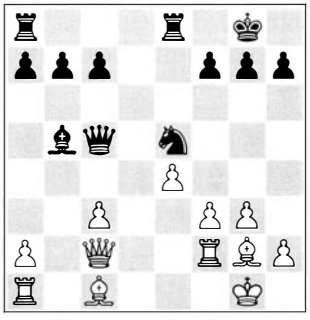
19...♘g6

The knight on e5 is 'hanging in the air', and so Black moves it to a safe square, at the same time driving the enemy bishop from the centre.

20.♗c1

Avoiding a small trap: 20.♗xc7? ♕c5+.

20...♖fe8 21.♖f2 ♕c5 22.e4 ♘e5



At the cost of great efforts, White has got his king out of the centre and played e2-e4, but this has weakened the square d3. Now Black returns the knight to the centre and starts to prepare a landing in the enemy position.

23.a4 ♗d3?!

This square should have been reserved for the knight. Stronger was 23...♗c4 24.♗a3 ♕e3 25.♕d2 ♕b6 26.♕d4 ♖ad8 27.♕xb6 axb6∓.

24.♕b3 ♖ad8 25.♕b4

The b7 pawn was poisoned: after 25.♕xb7? ♖b8 26.♕d5 ♕xc3 Black gets too many open lines, for example: 27.♕a2 ♗c4 28.♗b2 ♕a5 29.♕a3 ♖b3 with decisive threats.

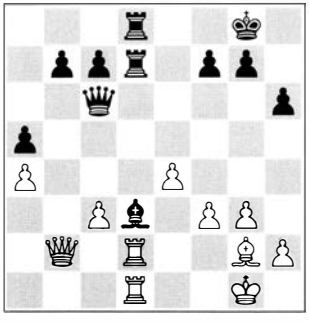
25...♕c6 26.♗f4 h6 27.♗xe5?!

He should have refrained from this exchange – why voluntarily deprive oneself of the bishop pair? After 27.♖d1 White's chances are no worse.

27...♖xe5 28.♖d1 a5 29.♕b2 ♖e7 30.♖fd2

If White decides to prevent his opponent doubling rooks on the d-file (30.♗h3 ♖d6 31.♖fd2), then after 31...♕c5+ 32.♔g2 (more stubborn is 32.♖f2 b5 33.axb5 ♗xb5 34.♖d4∓) 32...♖b6 33.♕a1 ♖xe4! he could come under attack.

30...♖ed7



White has numerous weaknesses all over the board, and his pieces occupy passive positions. It is already hard to advise him what to do.

31.h4

Mass exchanges bring White a difficult rook ending: 31.♗f1 ♗xf1 32.♖xd7 ♖xd7 33.♖xd7 ♕xd7 34.♔xf1 ♕xa4 35.♕xb7 ♕c4+! 36.♔f2 a4∓.

31...b6 32.♗h3 ♖d6 33.♕a3

33.♕a1 runs into the same blow: 33...♗c2! 34.♖xd6 ♖xd6 35.♖xd6 ♕xd6−+.

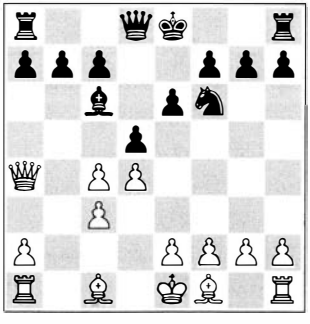
33...♗c2! 34.♖xd6 ♖xd6 35.♖d4

Or 35.♖xd6 cxd6, and Black wins the pawn on a4. The game ended:

35...♖xd4 36.cxd4 ♕xa4 37.♕c3 ♗b3 38.d5 ♕c4 39.♕e5 ♕c5+ 40.♔g2 ♗a4 41.h5 ♗b5 42.♕f5 ♗e8 43.f4 a4 44.♗g4 a3 45.♕e5 ♗b5 0-1

Game 2
Hoi,Carsten
Khenkin,Igor
Esbjerg 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♘e5 ♗d7 7.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♗xc6



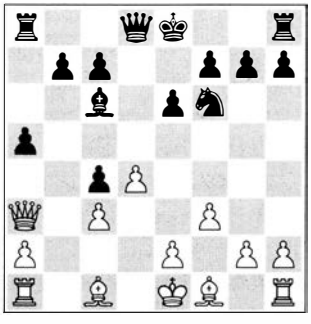
In the previous game we examined 9.♕b3 and came to the conclusion that after 9...dxc4 10.♕xc4 ♘e4! or the immediate 9...♘e4!? Black's initiative is very dangerous. But even so, can White really not be able to exploit his two bishops and central pawns? It turns out that he has another idea: to sacrifice the pawn on c4, but win time to complete his development and seize the centre.

9.♕c2

The alternative is **9.♕a3**, preventing Black castling kingside. Then possible is:

A) **9...♘e4** By analogy with the line 9.♕b3 dxc4 10.♕xc4 ♘e4, Black wants to get at the f2 pawn at once. **10.cxd5 ♗xd5 11.♗f4 ♕f6 12.♗g3 ♕h6 13.♕c1!** This is the difference; from a3 the queen can come to c1 and force a transition into an endgame; after 13.♖d1 ♘xg3 14.fxg3 ♕e3!? Black has the advantage. **13...♕xc1+ 14.♖xc1 ♗xa2** Black could fight for the advantage with 14...♘xg3 15.hxg3 ♗xa2 16.e4 e5 (after the immediate 16...a5 unpleasant is 17.♖h5!, but now Black has closed the fifth rank) 17.♖a1 (17.d5 a5∓) 17...♗e6 18.dxe5 a5∓. **15.♗xc7 ♔d7 16.f3 ♖hc8 17.fxe4 ♖xc7 18.e3 f6 19.♔d2 ♗c4** draw, T.Pähtz-Dizdar, Halle 1987;

B) **9...dxc4** The sharpest move – Black grabs the gambit pawn. **10.f3 a5**

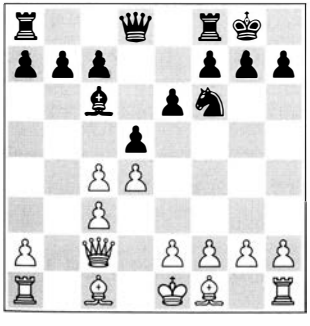


Analysis diagram

11.e3?! Too cautious – how is White going to develop his bishops now? Of course, more principled is 11.e4. Now after 11...b5 unpleasant for Black is 12.♕c5 ♖a6 (12...♕d6 13.♕g5 ♕e7 14.♕xg7 ♖g8 15.♕h6±) 13.a4 ♘d7 14.♕a3 ♕e7 15.♕a2±, but White must reckon with the knight sacrifice 11...♘xe4!? 12.fxe4 ♕h4+ 13.♔d1 ♕xe4 or first 13...♕g4+. I believe chances are about equal, although at a fast time-control, the position is easier to play with Black. **11...b5 12.♗e2** Here nothing is given by 12.♕c5, since after 12...♕d6 13.♕g5 there is no threat of e4-e5 forking. Black quietly castles – 13...0-0, and obtains a superior position, with both a material and a positional advantage. **12...♘d5 13.0-0 ♕e7 14.♕b2 ♘b6!?** A useful prophylactic move. Black prevents the advance a2-a4, and at the same time, after the inevitable e3-e4 the knight will not be attacked. **15.e4 0-0∓** Arias-N.V. Pedersen, Havana 2006.

9...dxc4

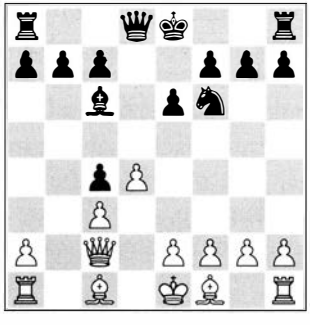
The move **9...0-0** also deserves the most serious attention, after which a large number of unexplored and practically inexhaustible positions can arise. We will quote a few games played along these lines; improvements, for both sides, can be sought at practically every move!



A) **10.♗g5** h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3 ♘e4 13.e3 ♔g7 14.cxd5 ♕xd5 15.f3 ♘xg3 16.hxg3 e5 17.c4 ♕d6 18.♕c3 draw, Moran Nuque-Moreno Carnero, Barcelona 1994;

B) **10.cxd5** exd5 11.e3 ♕d7 12.♗d3 (12.a4!?) 12...♗b5 13.0-0 ♗xd3 14.♕xd3 ♕a4 15.f3 ♖fe8 16.♗d2 b6 17.♗e1 c5 18.♗h4 ♘d7⇄ Cherniak-Deuch, Odessa 1991;

C) **10.f3 ♖e8** By keeping the pawn at d5, Black does not allow his opponent to advance e2-e4, but in the process, accepts the role of defender. Sharper positions arise if Black takes the pawn on c4 and plays to hold it: 10...dxc4!? 11.e4 b5 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗h4 ♕d7 (...g7-g5 would be terrible – Black has already castled and the white rook is still on h1, so after h2-h4 the attack will be fearsome. Instead, he must accept the doubled pawns) 14.♗xf6 gxf6 15.g4 ♕d6 16.♕d2 ♔g7 17.♖g1 ♖h8∓ R. Hernandez-Kozma, Leipzig 1975. Both kings experience definite discomfort, but Black has an extra pawn, for what it is worth. **11.cxd5 exd5 12.e3 ♘h5 13.♗d3 g6** After this passive move, White finally gets his king out of the centre and achieves a small, but long-lasting advantage. Black should prefer complications: 13...♘f4!? 14.♗xh7+ ♔h8⩲. **14.0-0 b5** 14...♘f6 15.♖b1 ♖b8 16.c4±. **15.e4 ♖b8 16.e5±** Denker-Pinkus, New York 1946.



10.f3

The key idea for White. He sacrifices a pawn, but in return, can establish control over the centre. At the very least, 10.♗a3 is illogical, since after 10...♘e4! we reach much the same situation as after 9.♕b3, but here Black has an extra pawn. Then possible is: 11.e3 b5 12.0-0-0 (the white king's residence on the queenside looks rather ramshackle) 12...a5 13.f3 ♘d6 14.e4 b4! (Black is clearly better) 15.cxb4 axb4 16.♗xb4 ♗a4 17.♕d2 ♗xd1 18.♔xd1 ♕d7∓ Stoltz-Nilsson, Örebro 1953.

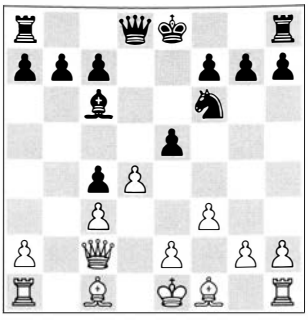
10...♘d7

Black opens a line for his queen to the kingside, whilst the knight transfers to the other flank to defend the c4 pawn. It is also possible to play **10...♘d5** with the same ideas, e.g. **11.e4 ♘b6 12.♗a3** (this prevents Black castling kingside, but at the same time it makes it easier foir him to castle queenside, because White deprives himself of the advance a2-a4-a5. In addition, the black queen obtains a post at g5. **12...♕g5 13.♔f2 0-0-0 14.g3 f5 15.exf5 exf5 16.♗h3 g6∓** Sorroche Martin-Gual Pascual, Sitges 1993;

The straightforward **10...0-0** 11.e4 b5 is also possible, after which we transpose into a position from the aforementioned game Hernandez-Kozma, Leipzig 1975;

We should also consider **10...e5?!**. This seems logical: Black is ahead in development, so opening the position should favour him.

However, there is another way of looking at it:



Analysis diagram

White has two bishops, which will be especially strong in an open position. Concrete variations show that, with best play on both sides, the centre stays closed, but White's play on the dark squares is sufficient compensation for the pawn:

11.e4 After 11.dxe5?! ♘d7 12.♗a3 ♕g5 Black's idea is justified, e.g.: 13.e6 fxe6 14.♕d2 ♕h4+ 15.g3 ♕f6 16.♗h3 0-0-0∓ Garcia Gonzales-Kurajica, Banja-Luka 1979. **11...b5 12.d5 ♗d7 13.♗a3 ♘h5 14.♕f2 ♘f4 15.h4 h5 16.0-0-0 ♘g6** With a knight on g6 instead of b6, it is much harder for Black to create counterplay on the queenside. **17.g3⩲** Kolev-Gual Pascual, St. Cugat 1993.

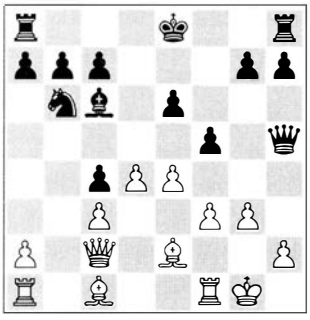
11.e4

After 11.g3 ♕f6 12.♗g2 e5 Black does open the position to his advantage.

11...♕h4+ 12.g3

Understandably, White does not wish to enter an ending a pawn down: 12.♕f2 ♕xf2+ 13.♔xf2 ♘b6, although after 14.♗f4 he probably has sufficient compensation for the small material deficit.

12...♕h5 13.♗e2 ♘b6 14.0-0 f5



This position reminds one of the similar line of Chigorin's Defence 1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘f3 ♗g4 4.cxd5 ♗xf3 5.dxc6 ♗xc6 6.♘c3 e6 7.e4 ♗b4 8.f3 ♕h4+ 9.g3 ♕h5 10.♗g2 0-0-0 11.♗e3 f5, but there, Black is definitely worse off than here – material is only equal and the pawn on e6 will be lost... Here, however, Black has comfortable play and can attack the enemy centre without any problems.

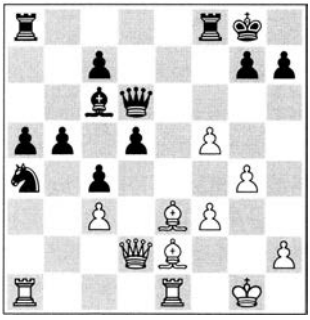
15.a4 a5 16.d5?

A nervous move, immediately placing White in a critical situation. It was necessary to complete development quietly, e.g. 16.♗f4 ♕f7 17.♕a2 0-0 18.♗xc4 ♘xc4 19.♕xc4 fxe4 20.fxe4 ♕d7 21.♖fe1 ♖f7. Black's position is only a little better: mainly because he has managed to fix the weak pawn on a4 and is attacking the e4 pawn (White much prefers not to play e4-e5, weakening the long diagonal and obstructing his own bishop).

16...exd5 17.exf5 0-0!

Perhaps White was imagining some kind of attack after 17...0-0-0 18.♗e3 ♖de8 19.f4 ♕f7 20.♗d4, but Black quietly evacuates his king to the short side and turns his attention to the weak pawn on a4.

18.g4 ♕e8 19.♗f4 ♘xa4 20.♖fe1 ♕d7 21.♗e3 b5 22.♕d2 ♕d6



23.♗d4

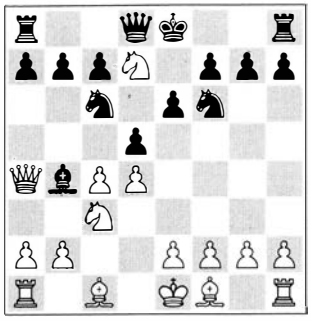
More stubborn was the move 23.♗d1!?, after which Black would have had a choice between the quiet retreat 23...♘c5 (I think this is the strongest move) and the more fanciful 23...♘xc3!? 24.♕xc3 b4 25.♕d2 ♖fe8, in both cases with good winning chances.

23...b4 24.♗d1 ♘xc3 25.♖e6 ♕d7 26.♗c2 ♘b5 27.♗c5 ♖f7 28.♖ae1 ♘d6 29.♕g5 b3 30.♗b1 c3 31.♗d3 ♗b5 32.♖e7 h6 33.♕h4 ♕xe7 34.♖xe7 ♗xd3 35.♖xf7 ♘xf7

White resigned.

Game 3
Colle,Edgar
Alekhine,Alexander
Hastings 1925/26

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♘e5 ♗d7 7.♘xd7



White immediately exchanges off the light-squared bishop and in the near future intends to try to force the exchange of the other bishop too. However, this move involves a loss of time, and, in addition, White weakens his control over the square e5.

7...♕xd7

The move 7...♘xd7 will be looked at later.

8.e3?!

Stronger is 8.a3 – see the later game Petrosian-Estrin.

8...e5

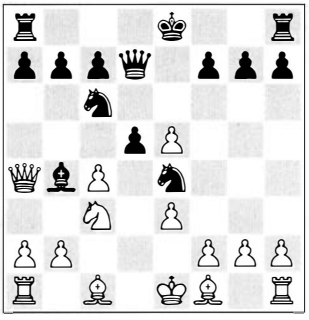
Exploiting his advantage in development, Black immediately strikes a blow in the centre. Also good are 8...♘e4, as played by Lautier against Karpov, and 8...0-0!?.

9.a3

Seemingly the best move – White immediately clarifies the position of the bishop on b4. The alternative is **9.dxe5**, after which Black has a choice between two good continuations:

A) **9...d4** Alekhine's recommendation. **10.a3** White is in trouble after 10.exd4 ♕xd4∓. **10...♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 dxe3 12.♗xe3** If he accepts the piece sacrifice – 12.exf6?, then he could fall under a very strong attack: 12...exf2+ 13.♔xf2 ♕f5+ 14.♔g3 (14.♔g1? ♕c5+ 15.♗e3 ♕xe3#; 14.♔e1 ♕e5+ 15.♔d1 ♕xc3 16.♖a2 0-0-0+ 17.♗d2 ♖d6∓) 14...♕e5+ 15.♔h4 ♕xf6+ 16.♗g5 ♕f2+ 17.g3 h6∓. **12...♘g4 13.♗d4 ♘gxe5 14.f4 ♘xd4 15.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 16.0-0-0 ♘c6 17.cxd4 ♖ad8⇄** Spielmann-Fine, Zandvoort 1936;

B) Apparently even stronger is Grünfeld's move **9...♘e4**, e.g.:



Analysis diagram

B1) **10.♕c2 d4! 11.a3 ♘c5!** This continuation is stronger than the piece sacrifice suggested a long time ago by the Kiev candidate master Efim Lazarev: 11...dxc3 12.axb4 ♘xb4. In Lipnitsky's opinion, after 13.♕xe4 0-0-0 14.♗e2 cxb2 15.♗xb2 ♕d2+ 16.♔f1 ♕xb2 17.♖b1 ♕c3 Black has a lasting initiative at no material cost. However, if we continue the variation a little: 18.♗g4+ ♔b8 19.♗f3 c6 20.g3 ♖d2 21.♔g2±, Black's initiative has come to nothing, he has a clumsy knight and the white bishop will become even more powerful if Black chooses to advance his queenside pawns. **12.exd4 ♘xd4 13.♕b1 ♗xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♘db3∓**;

B2) **10.a3 ♘xc3 11.♕c2 ♘a2+ 12.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 13.♕xd2 d4** Also good is 13...♘xe5 14.cxd5 0-0-0 15.♖xa2 ♕xd5 16.♕xd5 ♖xd5∓. **14.♖xa2**

0-0-0 15.♗e2 d3 16.♗d1 ♘xe5∓ Computer game 'Glaurung-CCT10'-'LearningLemming', Internet 2008.

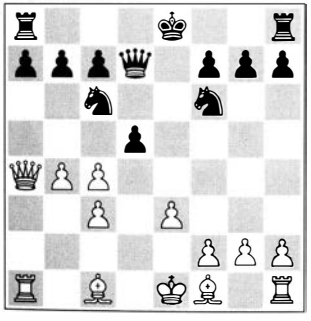
9...exd4!

Black is willing to exchange bishop for knight, but only in this precise form. Weaker is **9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 0-0 11.♖b1** Black is better after 11.cxd5?! ♘xd5 12.♗d2 ♖fe8 13.♗e2 ♖ad8∓ 14.0-0? ♘xd4!; White has blundered a pawn and immediately resigned out of disappointment, Maleki-Petkov, France 2007/08. **11...♖fe8 12.♗e2** One has the impression that White could simply take the pawn with 12.♖xb7!? and obtain the advantage. **12...exd4 13.cxd4 ♕f5 14.♖xb7 ♘e4 15.f3 ♘c3 16.♕xc6 ♕c2 17.0-0 ♘xe2+ 18.♔h1 ♕d3 19.♖e1 ♘xc1?** 19...♕c3 20.♖f1 ♕d3=. **20.♖xc1** 20.♕xc7! ♖f8 21.♖xc1 ♖ac8 22.♕a5 ♖xc4 23.♖e1±. **20...♕xa3 21.cxd5 ♕xe3⇄** Malk-Keres, Tartu 1935.

10.axb4

It is unfavourable for White to open the e-file: 10.exd4?! ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 0-0 12.♗e2 ♖ae8 13.♗e3 dxc4 14.♕xc4 ♘d5∓, and Black wins at least a pawn.

10...dxc3 11.bxc3



'White's development is far from complete, and after the exchange of the c4 pawn for the pawn on d5, the square d3 will become very weak. The bishop pair is not sufficient compensation here, since Black can always force the exchange of one of them. Black's game is preferable, and this is the consequence of the move 8.e3' – Alekhine.

11...0-0 12.♗e2

As the following game shows, White cannot stabilise the position in the centre: 12.c5 ♘e4 13.♕c2 ♕g4 14.♗b2 a5 15.b5 ♘e5 16.♖d1 ♖ad8 17.♗a3 ♖fe8∓ Skatchkov-Kosyrev, Sochi 1998.

12...dxc4 13.0-0

Alekhine criticises this move and recommends instead 13.♗xc4 or 13.♕b5, although he assesses the resulting positions as in favour of Black. 'White at least retains material equality, whereas now Black defends the extra pawn with a wonderful position' – Alekhine.
Here is how the game might develop: **13.♕b5** a6 14.♕xc4 ♘e5 15.♕d4 ♕e6 16.0-0 ♖fd8∓; **13.♗xc4** ♕g4 14.♗f1 ♘e4! 15.♕c2 ♖fd8∓ In both cases, there is no doubt as to Black's advantage.

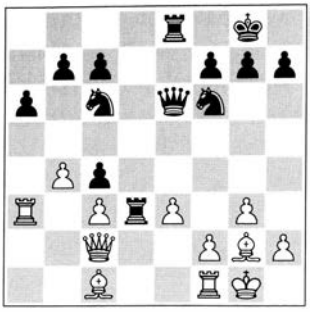
13...a6 14.♕c2

White cannot go in for complications on the queenside: 14.b5 ♘e5! (but not 14...axb5? 15.♕xa8 ♖xa8 16.♖xa8+ ♘e8 17.♖d1±) 15.bxa6 ♕xa4 16.♖xa4 ♖xa6 17.♖xa6 bxa6∓.

14...♕e6 15.♗f3

If 15.f3, to bring the dark-squared bishop to life, then 15...♘e5 16.e4 ♕b6+ 17.♔h1 ♖fd8 18.♗g5 ♘d3∓.

15...♖fe8 16.g3 ♖ad8 17.♗g2 ♖d3 18.♖a3



18...h5

Having obtained the advantage in the centre, Alekhine begins a kingside storm. Maybe it was even stronger to play 18...♘e4!, so as to transfer the knight via d6 to b5, and win the pawn on c3.

19.♖e1

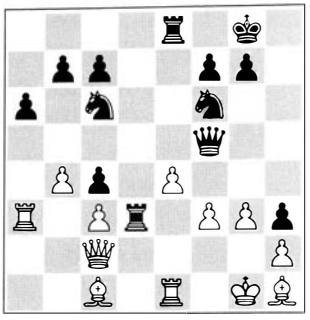
White patiently awaits his fate. What can he do? The counterplay on the queenside is clearly too late: 19.♕b1 h4 20.b5 h3 21.♗h1 axb5 22.♕xb5 ♖b8∓.

19...h4 20.e4 h3 21.♗h1 ♕f5!

Alekhine conducts the game in inspired fashion. However, the heartless computer considers that it was time to simply harvest some material with 21...♘e5 22.♕e2 ♕g4 23.♕xg4 ♘fxg4 24.♗f4 ♘f3+ 25.♗xf3 ♖xf3 26.♖e2 ♖d3 etc.

22.f3

White has to weaken his kingside further, since after 22.♕e2 there follows 22...♖xe4! (this is significantly stronger than 22...♘xe4? 23.f4!, and the fight continues) 23.♗xe4 ♘xe4, and White's position collapses: the c3-pawn is hanging, and on 24.♗b2 there follows 24...♖d2, whilst the knight cannot be taken – 24.♕xe4? ♕xe4 25.♖xe4 ♖d1+.



22...♕b5

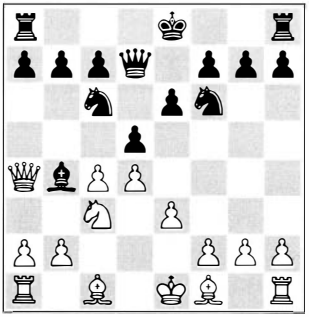
'Fully adequate was 22...♖xf3 23.♗xf3 ♕xf3, after which Black wins the e4 pawn, and then the game. But my aesthetic feeling would not let me relieve the opponent of such a dreadful bishop' – Alekhine.

23.♕f2 ♖ed8 24.♕c5 ♕xc5+ 25.bxc5 ♘d7 26.♗e3 ♘b4 27.♗d4 ♘c2 28.♖aa1 ♘xa1 29.♖xa1 ♘xc5

White resigned.

Game 4
Karpov,Anatoly
Lautier,Joel
Baden-Baden 1992

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♘e5 ♗d7 7.♘xd7 ♕xd7 8.e3



8...♘e4

I would remind you that Alekhine played 8...e5! against Colle, and this seems to be the most energetic plan in this position.

Often, the routine **8...0-0** is played here, but in this case, in my opinion, White can legitimately count on an advantage, e.g.: **9.a3** Also good is 9.♗d2 a6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗d3 ♖fe8 12.0-0 ♗d6 13.h3 ♖ad8 14.♖ac1 ♕e6 15.a3 ♘e7 16.♕c2 c6 17.♘a4 ♘e4 18.♗a5± Novak-Freise, Germany Bundesliga B 1995/96. **9...♗e7 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗e2 a6 12.♗f3 b5 13.♕c2 ♘a5 14.0-0 ♘c4 15.b3 ♘b6 16.a4 b4 17.♘e2 a5 18.♘f4 ♖ac8 19.♗b2 c6 20.♖ac1±** Bartel-Berescu, Dresden 2007.

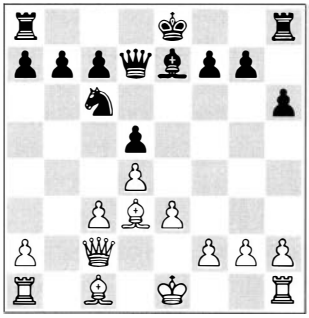
9.♕c2 ♘xc3

With a delay of one move, the break **9...e5** is now not so effective: 10.cxd5 ♕xd5 11.♗d3 ♘d6 12.0-0 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 e4 14.♗e2 ♘a5 15.♕a4+ c6 16.f3± Dubinin-Averbakh, Moscow 1944;

Interesting is **9...0-0 10.♗d3 f5**, strengthening the knight on e4. Then possible is: **11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘a5 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♗a3!?** White wants to exchange his dark-squared bishop; little is promised by 14.c4 ♘xc4 15.♗xc4 dxc4 16.♕xc4+ ♖f7 17.♖b1 b6 18.a4 a5 19.f3 ♘d6 20.♕d5 ♖e8⇄ Sorkin-Lastin, Internet 2010. **14...♘d6** 14...♖f7 15.f3 ♘d6 16.♗xd6 cxd6 17.e4±. **15.♗xd6 cxd6 16.g4!?** – a sharp position arises, in which White retains the initiative.

10.bxc3 ♗e7 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♗d3 h6

Black does not have full equality after 12...g6 13.0-0 0-0 14.e4 dxe4 15.♗xe4± Sarsa-Massinen, Finland 1991.



13.♕a4

As we know, Black's plan is to establish a blockade on the light squares – for example, to transfer a knight to c4 and play ...b7-b5. White in his turn should activate his dark-squared bishop, and to do this, he needs to play either c3-c4 or e3-e4. Karpov chooses the first plan, possibly because after the exchange of the c3 pawn for that on d5, White retains a solid pawn chain from d4 to h2. However, a more dynamic plan, with **13.0-0** followed by e3-e4, deserved attention. For example:

A) **13...♘a5 14.♗f5!?** The queen on d7 is very comfortable, so it makes sense to drive it away. If it goes to d6, then later it could come under attack from the dark-squared bishop, for example after a4 and ♗a3 or g3 and ♗f4, whilst on c6, it obstructs the path of the pawn on c7, since it is useful for Black to play ...c7-c5, so as to clarify the situation in the centre. **14...♕c6 15.e4±**;

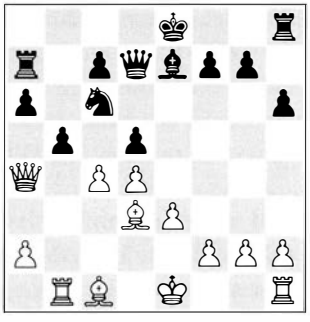
B) **13...0-0 14.♗h7+** Rybka for some reason likes this intermediate check, but I am not convinced that it is so useful for White. Possibly it was better to start with ♗f5 at once. **14...♔h8**

15.♗f5 ♕d6 16.e4 dxe4 17.g3!? The pawn structure is reminiscent of a popular *tabiya* of the Russian Defence, but here White has the advantage of the bishop pair, and it will be far from simple for Black to block his opponent's central pawns. **17...♗g5** Or 17...♘a5 18.♗f4 ♕f6 19.♗xe4 ♗d6 20.♗e3 c6 21.c4±. **18.♗xg5 hxg5 19.♗xe4±**.

13...a6 14.♖b1 ♖a7!

Not 14...b5? because of 15.♗xb5, whilst after the 'simple' 14...♖b8, White obtains the advantage by means of 15.c4! (after 15.0-0 b5 the pawn on a6 cannot be taken: 16.♕xa6 ♖b6 17.♕a8+ ♖b8 with a perpetual attack on the queen) 15...dxc4 16.♕xc4±.

15.c4 b5!



The 'soul' of Black's idea: this temporary pawn sacrifice allows Black to save the d5 pawn from exchange, and thus to preserve the semi-closed character of the position, in which the white bishops will find it difficult to show their full scope.
White has a stable advantage after 15...dxc4 16.♕xc4±.

16.cxb5 axb5 17.♕xb5 0-0

Taking the pawn at once is bad: 17...♖xa2 18.♗d2 0-0 19.♖c1.

18.♗c2

White frees up a retreat for his queen. However, the queen sacrifice also deserved attention: 18.a4!? ♖b8 19.♕xb8+ ♘xb8 20.♖xb8+ ♗d8 (20...♗f8? 21.♗a3+−) 21.0-0 g6 (clearly, White's passed pawn cannot be taken: 21...♖xa4? 22.♗b5) 22.♗a3 ♔g7 23.♗c5±. Here White is certainly not going to lose, although Black probably has sufficient defensive resources.

18...♖xa2 19.♕d3 g6 20.♗d2

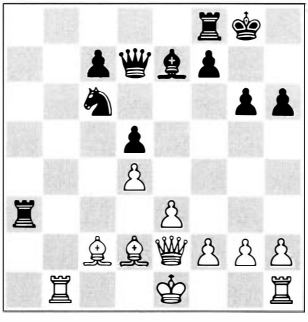
White has protected the e4-square against the enemy knight's invasion, but in doing so, has given his opponent an unexpected tactical resource.

20...♖a3?!

Black misses his chance. After 20...♕g4 21.0-0 (21.g3 ♕f3) 21...♕f5! 22.e4 (22.♕xf5 gxf5 23.♖bc1 ♗a3) 22...♕xe4 23.♕xe4 dxe4 24.♗xe4 ♖xd2 25.♗xc6 ♖xd4 he would have a healthy extra pawn, although the opposite-coloured bishops would of course give White reasonable drawing chances.

21.♕e2

White underestimates his opponent's dynamic chances. It was better to settle for the exchange of one of his bishops and head for an equal position after 21.♗b3 ♘a5 22.♗xa5 ♖xa5 23.0-0.



21...♕e6!

Now White cannot castle because of the threat against d4, so his king is trapped in the centre.

22.h3 h5

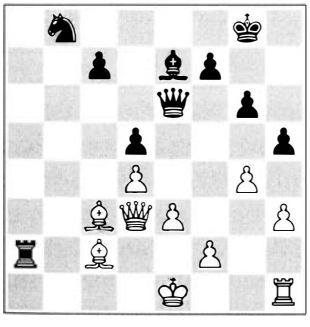
This allows White to stir up complications on the kingside, thanks to which the idle rook on h1 becomes an active and useful piece. Worth consideration was 22...♖fa8, when White cannot force the exchange of queens: 23.♕g4 f5! 24.♕e2 ♗f6 with the initiative to Black.

23.g4 ♖a2 24.♗c3

The bishops cover all the entry squares on the queenside. Black's activity in this sector gradually dwindles to nothing.

24...♖b8 25.♖xb8+ ♘xb8 26.♕d3?!

After this inaccuracy, White could again find himself on the verge of difficulties. Karpov obviously rejected the natural 26.gxh5 because of the pin 26...♕c6 27.♔d2 ♗b4 28.♕d3 ♖a3. White must part with his queen, but after 29.♗xb4 ♖xd3+ 30.♗xd3 ♕a4 31.♗c3 chances are balanced. Rook and two bishops is sufficient material equivalent for queen and knight, and the white king feels perfectly safe behind the barricades formed by its pawns and bishops.



26...hxg4

Noticeably stronger was 26...♖a3!, and White cannot transpose back into the previous variation, since after 27.gxh5 (27.♕b5 ♖xc3 28.♕xb8+ ♔g7 with a strong initiative to Black, since the king on e1 is very weak) there is 27...♘c6! with the threat of ...♖xc3 and ...♗b4. He would have to give up the bishop on c3 for the b8 knight, although this is far from being an equal exchange.

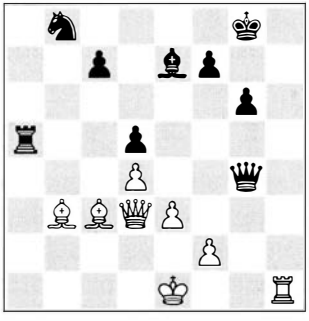
27.♗b3! ♖a3 28.♗b2

Two accurate intermediate moves and the enemy rook has to retreat to its own half of the board.

28...♖a5 29.hxg4 ♕xg4

Black has won a pawn, but his pieces have lost coordination (the knight on b8 presents an especially sad appearance).

30.♗c3



30...♕g2?

This move transfers the initiative to White. Black could keep the advantage by using the tactical motif with which we are already familiar: 30...♖a3 31.♕b5 ♘d7 32.♕xd5 ♕f5!. So as not

to lose a piece (both 33...♕xd5 and 33...♕b1+ are threatened), White must play 33.♔d2 ♕xf2+ 34.♔d3 ♗d6 35.♖b1. White has definite compensation for the pawn, but it is not sufficient for equality.

31.♖f1 ♖a3 32.♕b5 ♘d7 33.♗xd5 ♕g4 34.♗b2 ♖a6 35.f3?!

Of course, the rook cannot be taken – 35.♕xa6? ♗b4+, but White can force the exchange of queens by 35.♕e2 ♗b4+ 36.♔d1 with clearly the better chances in the endgame. With queens on, however, Black's chances are at the very least not worse, because the white king is very vulnerable in the centre.

35...♕g2

More accurate is 35...♕g3+ 36.♔d1 ♖b6 37.♕e2 ♕d6⇄.

36.♕e2 ♕g3+ 37.♔d1 ♖b6 38.f4

An inaccuracy. Stronger was 38.♗c3 ♘f6 39.♗a2. It is easy to imagine that both players were now in time-trouble.

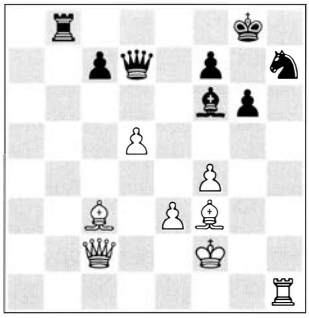
38...♘f6 39.♗f3 ♕h3 40.♖h1 ♕e6?

Black makes the last mistake. After 40...♕f5!, threatening a check on b1, the advantage would be on his side.

41.d5!

White opens the long diagonal with tempo and begins to create threats against the enemy king.

41...♕d7 42.♕c2 ♖b4 43.♗c3 ♖b8 44.♔e2 ♘h7 45.♔f2 ♗f6



46.♖xh7! ♗xc3 47.♕xg6+!

Two nice blows allow White to take play into an endgame with an extra pawn, which Karpov conducts to victory with good technique.

47...fxg6 48.♖xd7 ♖b2+ 49.♔g3 ♗d2 50.e4 ♖b8 51.♖xc7 ♖f8 52.f5 gxf5 53.e5 ♗e1+ 54.♔h3 ♖d8 55.d6 ♗b4 56.♗d5+ ♔h8 57.♖c6 ♔g7 58.♔g3 ♔g6 59.♔f4 ♗d2+ 60.♔f3 ♗b4 61.♔e3 ♔g5 62.♔d4 ♖h8 63.♗g2 ♔f4 64.♖c4 ♖b8 65.♗c6 ♔g5 66.♖xb4 ♖xb4+ 67.♔c5 ♖b8 68.d7

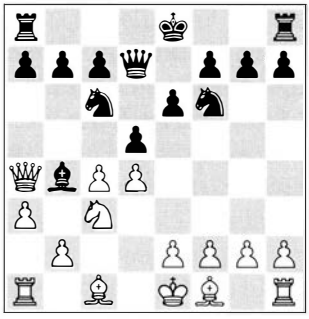
Black resigned.

Game 5
Petrosian,Tigran
Estrin,Yakov
Moscow 1956

1.c4 e6 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.d4 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♘e5 ♗d7 7.♘xd7 ♕xd7 8.a3

This move was recommended by Alekhine. Black probably now has to exchange off his other bishop as well, and so White obtains the 'whole' bishop pair, i.e. two bishops against two knights, as well as protecting the d4-pawn. But all this treasure is pur-

chased only at the cost of yet another tempo, after which Black's advantage in development becomes substantial.



8...♗xc3+

'He who would dig a pit for others must be careful not to fall into it himself' – **8...♘xd4?** 9.axb4 ♕xa4 10.♖xa4, and White realised his extra piece, Dubreuil-Leconte, Cannes 2007. This trap was pointed out long ago by Lipnitsky.

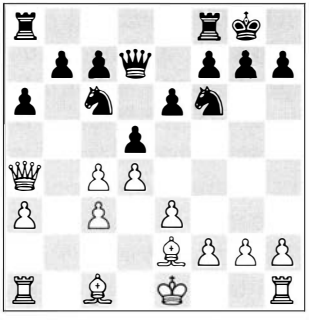
The bishop retreat **8...♗e7** is not in the spirit of the position, because Black's task is to be first to start an attack, exploiting his advantage in development. More than half a century's practice has shown that White can count on an advantage here, e.g.: 9.e3 0-0 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗e2±, and by transposition, we have reached a position favourable for White, from the game Bartel-Berescu, Dresden 2007, considered in the note to Black's 8th move in the game Karpov-Lautier.

9.bxc3 ♘e4

Trying to harass the opponent at once, but Black has other interesting possibilities:

A) **9...0-0** This seemingly rather tame move is in fact the prelude to an interesting gambit. **10.e3 a6** Of course, Black is not obliged to sacrifice anything. Possible, for example, is 10...e5⇄ – see the variation 9...e5 10.e3 0-0. Black also successfully solved his opening problems in the following game: 10...♖fe8 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♗d3 a6 13.0-0 b5 14.♕c2 ♘a5 15.f3 c5⇄ C.K. Pedersen-Ovetchkin, Alushta 2004. In my view, White should refrain from the exchange on d5, and then he can pretend to an advantage.

11.♗e2 The move 11.♖b1 does not prevent Black implementing his idea: 11...b5!? 12.cxb5 axb5 13.♕xb5 ♖fb8 14.♕d3 ♖xb1 15.♕xb1 ♖b8 16.♕c2 ♘a5 17.♗d3 c5 18.dxc5 ♕c6 19.0-0 ♕xc5⩲ Zarkua-Gelashvili, Adana 2006.



11...b5!? This interesting pawn sacrifice was first seen in the game Tolush-Sokolsky, Leningrad 1938. Black wants to exploit his lead in development, to create pressure on the a- and b-files, and ideally, to blockade the white queenside on the light squares. One may say that this line is a 'distant cousin' of the Benko Gambit.

12.cxb5 axb5 13.♕xb5 ♖fb8 14.♕d3 ♘a5 15.0-0 ♕c6

'Black's pressure grows and White's queenside is hamstrung. His dark-squared bishop plays an especially poor role, being completely blocked in' –

Lipnitsky. However, things are not all so simple. White has a solid pawn structure, no clear weaknesses, and the bishops may one day emerge from their slumbers – not to mention his extra pawn!

16.♕c2

The move 16.f3!? deserves consideration. White agrees to return the pawn on a3, but it is very important for him to try to achieve the advance e3-e4 and activate his bishops: 16...♖b3 17.♗d2 ♘c4 18.♗e1 ♖axa3 19.♖xa3 ♘xa3 20.♗d1 ♖b1 21.♗d2 ♕b7⇄ Schöne-Feick, Germany Oberliga 1993/94.

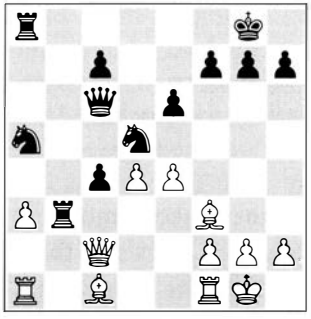
16...♖b3

'Black rushes. The desire to speed up the pace of events leads to his missing a beautiful tactical blow for White. He should have continued 16...♘e4 17.♗d3 ♕xc3'. But here instead of Lipnitsky's 18.♗xe4 much stronger is 18.♖a2! ♕xc2 19.♖xc2, and only White can have any chance of winning. In reality, Sokolsky's move is far from bad.

17.c4

This is the tactical resource missed by Black. But is it so terrible for him?

17...dxc4 18.♗f3 ♘d5 19.e4



Analysis diagram

In the middle of the last century, this position would unanimously have been assessed as good for White, but things are not so clear. Let us continue the analysis a little:

19...♘c3!

The rook and knight set-up, defending the c4 pawn, looks very unstable, but breaking it down is not so simple!

20.♗e3 ♕d7 21.♖fc1 ♘b5

This is where the black knight was aiming. He attacks two pawns, on a3 and e4.

22.d5

After 22.♖d1 c3 23.e5 c6 24.a4 ♘a3 Black's pawns start to roll.

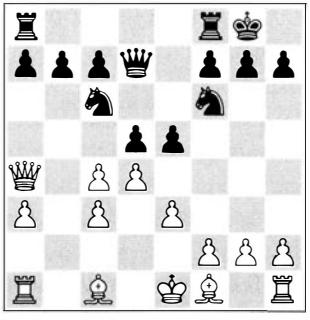
22...exd5 23.exd5 ♘d6⇄

The white bishops are tamed and the power of the passed c4 pawn should not be underestimated.

B) **9...e5**

A recommendation of grandmaster Ludek Pachman. 'The exchange of the black bishop for the white knight at c3 has led to a strengthening of the white pawn centre. In what follows, White will try to set his pawn centre in motion and open lines for his bishops. After the black pawn at d5 loses the support of its neighbour, it is extremely doubtful that Black will be able to restrain the enemy centre and establish a blockade' – Lipnitsky.

10.e3 0-0



Analysis diagram

11.♗e2!?

It is important to hurry with the evacuation of the king from the centre; weaker is 11.♖b1 ♖fe8 12.♗e2 exd4 13.cxd4 ♕f5 14.♖xb7 ♘e4 15.f3 ♘c3 16.♕xc6 ♕c2 17.0-0 ♘xe2+ 18.♔h1 ♕d3⇄ Malk-Keres, Tartu 1935 (also quoted in the previous game).

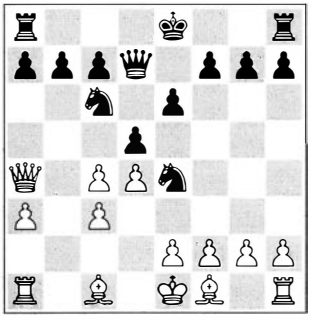
Black is also fine after 11.♗d3 ♖fe8 12.0-0 e4 13.♗c2 dxc4 14.♕xc4 ♘a5 15.♕b4 ♕d5! with a blockade on the light squares (Dvoretsky).

11...♖fe8 12.♗b2

Preventing the possibility of a double capture on d4, in the event of castling.

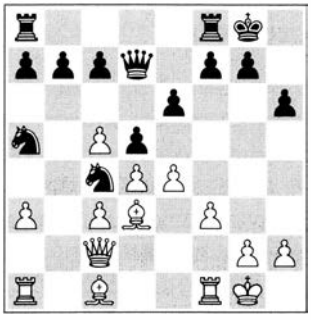
12...dxc4 13.♕xc4 ♘a5 14.♕b4±

Back to the game.



10.♕c2

A solid move, but a little slow, and in addition, Black's hands are now freed for the standard manoeuvre ...♘c6-a5 followed by the occupation of c4 and the advance ...c7-c5. Probably White can permit himself more direct play: **10.f3!? ♘d6** 10...♘xc3?! 11.♕c2 dxc4 12.♕xc3 ♕xd4 13.♗b2 – the two bishops in an open position are clearly stronger than the knight and three pawns. **11.c5 ♘c4 12.e4 ♘6a5 13.♕c2 0-0 14.♗d3 h6** (Olsen-Lund, Klaksvik 2008) **15.0-0**



Analysis diagram

Of course, Black has quite a solid position, with eternal control over the square c4, and after ...b7-b6 and an exchange on b6, he will be able to open one of the files on the queenside (it is not immediately obvious whether the a- or c-file is better) for pressure on the queenside. Even so, he has two knights both aiming for one square and the 'reserve' knight on a5 is not very well placed. White has the two bishops and a solid pawn structure, and can develop pressure on the kingside. I would prefer White, although, of course, this is a subjective assessment. Only practice can show whose chances are preferable.

10...♘a5

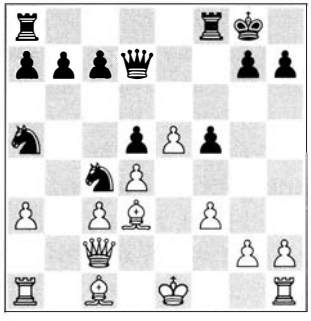
Black immediately tries to seize control of the c4-square. This typical knight jump could also have been postponed a little: 10...0-0 11.e3 ♘a5 12.♗d3 f5 13.cxd5 exd5 14.a4 c5 15.♗a3 ♖f6 16.♗xc5 ♘xc5 17.dxc5 ♖c8 18.0-0 ♖xc5⇄ I.Sokolov-Milov, Istanbul 2000.

Less successful is the attempt to establish pawn control of the centre with 10...f5, on account of 11.f3 ♘d6 12.c5 ♘c4 13.e4 fxe4 (13...b6!?) 14.♗xc4 dxc4 15.♕xe4 0-0 16.0-0 b6 17.♖e1 ♖ae8 18.a4± Izsak-Berescu, Hungary 2007/08.

11.cxd5 exd5 12.f3 ♘d6 13.e4 0-0

In a recent game, Black decided to exchange off one of the enemy bishops, but in doing so, he presented White with a mobile pawn centre. In my opinion, White was the beneficiary of this operation: 13...dxe4 14.fxe4 ♕e6 15.♗d3 ♘b3 16.♖b1 ♘xc1 17.♖xc1 f6 18.0-0± Izsak-Shengelia, Hungary 2010.

14.♗d3 f5 15.e5 ♘dc4



16.g4

I have to admit that at this moment, I checked the database again – is it really Petrosian playing White? If one believes the stereotypes, then from 'Iron Tigran' one would expect a slow build-up of pressure: f4, 0-0, ♔h1, ♖g1... But no, Tigran Vartanovich could play in different styles!

16...fxg4 17.♗xh7+ ♔h8 18.f4 g5?!

The master and theoretician Yakov Estrin, a future world correspondence champion, also demonstrates his fiery temperament! But there was no need at all to expose the king like this; preferable is 18...♘b3 19.♕xb3 ♔xh7 20.♖g1 ♕f5 21.♕d1±.

19.♗d3 gxf4 20.♖g1?!

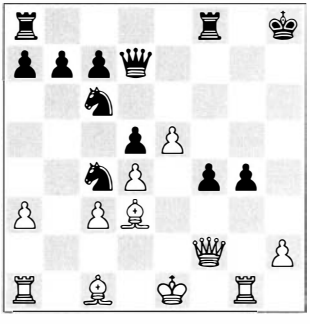
White would create very dangerous threats after 20.♕f2!±.

20...♘c6?!

Black should immediately send his queen over to the help of his king: 20...♕g7 21.♕f2 ♕g5! 22.h4 ♕h5 23.♗xf4 ♖f7⇄.

21.♕f2?!

With a one-move delay, this move is nothing like so effective; probably, White underestimated his opponent's idea. Much stronger was 21.♗xc4 dxc4 22.♕g6 ♖g8 23.♕f6+ ♕g7 24.♗xf4, and Black must accept a difficult endgame after 24...♕xf6 25.exf6 ♖af8 26.♖f1 ♖f7.



21...♘4xe5! 22.dxe5 ♘xe5

By sacrificing a piece, Black has greatly sharpened the position. He has strengthened the pawn on g4, thereby somewhat safeguarding his king, and has destroyed the escape path of his opposite number. Now both kings are in danger!

23.♗c2?

Rybka recommends 23.♕h4+ ♔g8 24.♔f1 ♖ae8 and here it wants to throw fat into the fire with 25.c4!?. Frankly

speaking, I am not able to give an assessment of these crazy complications, but the one thing which is clear is that White should have played this way, at least on his 23rd and 24th moves. Petrosian plays a more human move (and in those days, there was no other sort!) – he moves the bishop from under attack, but this decision proves very misguided.

23...♘f3+ 24.♔d1 ♖ae8?

He should have simply taken the rook, then freed the g4-square for his queen and gone over to the attack: 24...♘xg1! 25.♕xg1 (25.♗xf4 ♘f3) 25...g3! 26.♔d2 ♕g4 – White can hardly hope to save himself here, given his catastrophic lack of development.

25.♖h1

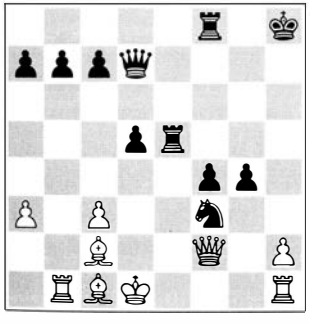
A belated acknowledgement that White's 20th move was mistaken, and the rook is better on h1.

25...♖e5

25...♔g8!? deserves consideration, getting the king in advance off the h-file and the long diagonal, which the bishop on c1 dreams of reaching.

26.♖b1

Obviously, after 26.h3 Black intended 26...♖h5, neutralising the x-ray of the rook at h1.



26...b6?

Incomprehensible dawdling – who can worry about the fate of the b7 pawn, in such a sharp position? After 26...d4! 27.cxd4 ♖fe8! Black goes over to a decisive assault.

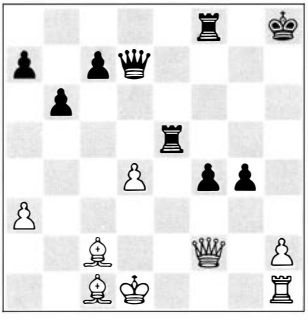
27.♖b4! d4

On the previous move, this advance was virtually winning, but now White has the advantage.

28.♖xd4!

One can talk about how exchange sacrifices were a favourite weapon of Tigran Petrosian, but in this case, there is no choice – after 28.cxd4 c5 29.♖b3 ♕xd4+ 30.♕xd4 ♘xd4 31.♗b2 ♖h5 White would face a fight for a draw.

28...♘xd4 29.cxd4



29...♕d5?

After 29...♔g8 30.♗d2 Black has a position which looks unpleasant to a human player, but which it is possible to play. After the text, however, White is able to achieve a decisive advantage immediately.

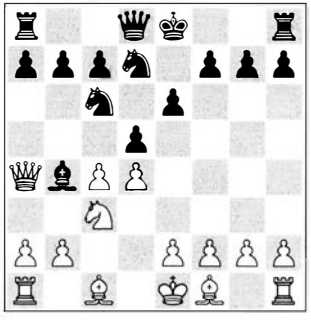
30.♖g1 c5 31.♗xf4

Black resigned. After 31...♖h5 32.♗e5+ he is mated in three moves. A

sharp game, which still to this day retains definite theoretical significance. The fact is that in the Ragozin Variation, it is not easy for Black to avoid the variation 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♘e5 ♗d7 7.♘xd7 ♕xd7 8.a3. After 8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♘e4 10.♕c2, as played by Petrosian, or 10.f3!?, White, to my mind, can count on an advantage. Black also has problems after 9...e5 10.e3. Probably more attention should be given to Sokolsky's gambit suggestion 9...0-0 10.e3 a6 11.♗e2 b5!?.

Game 6
Bartel,Mateusz
Laznicka,Viktor
Polanica Zdroj 2007

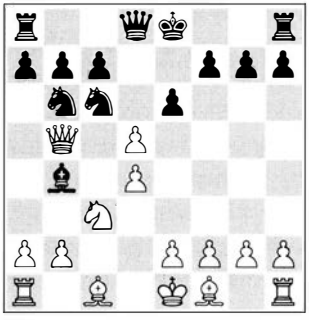
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♘e5 ♗d7 7.♘xd7 ♘xd7



A good alternative to capturing with the queen. Black transfers his knight to the queenside with tempo (exploiting the position of the enemy queen on a4) and starts a battle in that sector of the board.

8.e3

The pawns on c4 and d4 need defending and White defends them both with one move. One of the plusses of the move 7...♘xd7 is that White cannot now methodically set about killing off the other black bishop: **8.a3?!** ♘b6 9.♕d1 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♘xc4 11.e4 0-0 12.♗xc4 dxc4 13.0-0, Rosko-B.Furman, Nachod 2009, 13...♘a5 14.♖b1 ♘b3 15.♗f4 b5∓.
Lipnitsky promised White an advantage after **8.cxd5 ♘b6 9.♕b5**, but things are not so one-sided.



Analysis diagram

Black has several possibilities, all of which require further study:

A) **9...a6 10.♕d3 ♕xd5** Black tries to extract the maximum out of his lead in development: he brings his queen out and prepares queenside castling, in order to strengthen the pressure on the d-file. **11.a3 ♕a5** Perfectly possible, though much less ambitious, is 11...♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 f5. **12.♖b1 0-0-0 13.e3** The bishop cannot be taken: after 13.axb4? ♘xb4 14.♕d1 ♖xd4! White's position collapses. **13...♗xc3+ 14.♕xc3?!** White must strengthen the central square d4, without fearing the sacrifice of a pawn: 14.bxc3 e5 15.♗d2 ♕xa3 16.♗e2⩲. **14...♕d5** Naturally, Black refrains from the queen exchange and tries to prevent his opponent from completing his development, for which purpose he attacks the pawn on g2. **15.f4?** An unfortunate attempt to prevent ...e6-e5. **15...g5! 16.fxg5 e5∓** (Granero Roca-Halkias, Benidorm 2009) The white monarch faces tough times.

B) **9...♘xd5** A possible move, although the logic of the manoeuvre of the knight via f6-d7-b6xd5 is not easy to understand. **10.♗d2 0-0 11.e3 a6 12.♕d3 ♕e7 13.♗e2** White has got what he wanted: he has two bishops and a firm position in the centre. First, he must complete his development, and then he can think about an attack in the centre or on the queenside. **13...♖fd8 14.0-0 e5 15.♘xd5! ♖xd5 16.♗f3 ♖dd8 17.♗xc6** 17.♗xb4 ♕xb4 18.a3 ♕b6 19.d5 ♘e7⇄. **17...bxc6 18.♗xb4 ♕xb4 19.♕c3 ♖ab8** It was better to go into a rook ending – 19...♕xc3 20.bxc3 ♖ab8, although here too, after for example 21.♖ab1 f6 22.g4 White is slightly better. **20.dxe5 ♕xb2 21.♕xc6 ♕xe5 22.♕xa6±** l'Ami-Koneru, Wijk aan Zee 2008. His piece activity is only partial compensation for the lost pawn, and Black faces a fight for a draw;

C) **9...exd5** A solid move, the idea of which is to regroup his pieces along Carlsbad lines – bring the bishop to d6, pointing at h2, play the knight to e7 and play ...c7-c6 if necessary. **10.e3** White should not hurry to get his bishop outside the pawn chain: 10.♗f4?! 0-0 11.e3 g5! 12.♗g3 f5, and Black, exploiting his lead in development, firmly seizes the initiative. **10...0-0 11.♗e2 ♗d6 12.0-0 ♘e7 13.a4!? a5 14.♕b3**



Analysis diagram

14...♘c6 A deep approach; White has weakened the square b4 and now Black returns the knight to c6. **15.♗f3** 15.♘b5!? ♗e7 16.♗d2 ♘b4⇄. **15...♘b4 16.e4** A timely decision, else after ...f7-f5 Black could play to set up a bind. **16...dxe4 17.♘xe4 c6⇄** V. Filippov-Zviagintsev, Elista 1997. The black knights have excellent outposts on b4 and d5 and are hardly any weaker than the enemy bishops.

8...♘b6

8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♘b6 leads to a transposition of moves.

9.♕b3 dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♘xc4 11.♕xc4

White has been deprived of the advantage of the two bishops and the position has simplified. Black should not have great problems maintaining equality.

11...♕d5

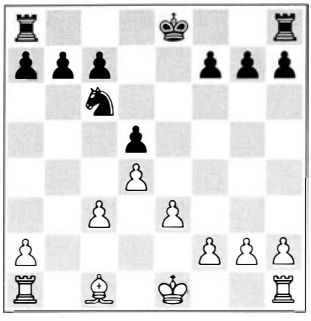
It was also possible to continue with the queens on, but the exchange on d5 should be offered soon or not at all. It is not clear why White should have any advantage: his bishop is restricted by its own pawns, and if he plays e3-e4, then Black can fasten onto the d4 pawn: **11...0-0** 12.0-0 ♖e8 (12...♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♕d5 14.♕e2 ♘a5 15.♗a3 ♖fc8 16.♖ab1 f5 17.♖b5 ♕c4 18.♕b2 b6⇄ Letelier-Wexler, Mar del Plata 1953) 13.♗d2 ♕h4 14.h3 a6 15.♕b3 ♖ab8 16.♕c2 ♖bd8 17.♖ad1 ♗f8⇄ Bannink-Kupreichik, Oberwart 2001.

12.♕xd5 ♗xc3+

Black has also played **12...exd5** 13.♗d2 ♗xc3 14.♗xc3 ♔d7 15.♔e2 ♖ae8 16.♔d3 ♖e6 17.♖ae1 ♖he8 18.♖e2 f5 19.♖he1 ♘e7 20.f3 ♘g6 21.♗d2 ♖a6

22.♗b4 ♖b6 (Black does not risk playing his rook into the prepared trap, although he could have tried this: 22...♖xa2 23.♗a3 ♖e6 24.♔c3 ♖b6 25.e4 dxe4 26.fxe4 ♘f4!? with great complications) 23.♗c3 ♖be6⇄ Olsen-Sjodahl, Copenhagen 1995.

13.bxc3 exd5



We have a typical Ragozin endgame. If White dithers, Black will establish a light-square blockade and the advantage of a good knight against a bad bishop. But objectively, the bishop on c1 is not so bad; it can come out to a3, and, the main thing, White has the resource f2-f3 and e3-e4. So in the subsequent struggle, the chances are about equal.

14.f3

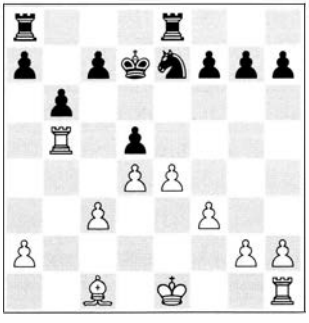
The following game shows that White is not recommended to take his king out of the centre: 14.♖b1 b6 15.0-0 ♘a5 16.f3 f5 17.e4 fxe4 18.fxe4 dxe4 19.♗g5 ♖f8 20.♖fe1 ♔d7 21.♖xe4 ♖ae8∓ El Gindy-Safin, Al Ain 2008.

White should put his king on d3 and play c3-c4 or e3-e4 at the first convenient moment, so as to free his long-range bishop: **14.♔e2 ♘a5 15.♔d3 f5 16.f3 0-0-0 17.♗d2?!** Here there is an important improvement. White wishes to advance e3-e4 with the exchange of one pair of rooks, so that his king does not come under attack. Therefore: 17.♖e1! ♖de8 18.e4 fxe4+ 19.fxe4 dxe4+ 20.♖xe4 ♖xe4 21.♔xe4 ♖f8 22.♗f4⇄. **17...♖de8 18.♗e1 ♘c4 19.♗f2** As a result of this three-move manoeuvre, the bishop ends up looking like a big pawn. Black has managed to prevent the break e3-e4 and has completely taken over the initiative. **19...♖e6 20.♖he1 ♖he8∓** Schöne-Luther, Osterburg 2006.

14...♔d7

Worthy of consideration was **14...f5 15.♔e2 0-0-0**, fighting against the break e3-e4, although after 16.♔d3 (16.♗d2?! ♖he8 17.♔d3 a6 18.♗e1 ♖e6 19.♗g3 ♖de8 20.♖ae1 b5∓ Laxman-Sadorra, Singapore 2007) 16...♖he8 17.♖g1! White prepares g2-g4, opening lines on the kingside and achieving satisfactory play.

15.♖b1 b6 16.♖b5 ♘e7 17.e4 ♖he8



18.0-0?!

There are general endgame principles, with which one cannot argue. As we have already said, the king's place is on d3, so stronger was 18.♔d2!.

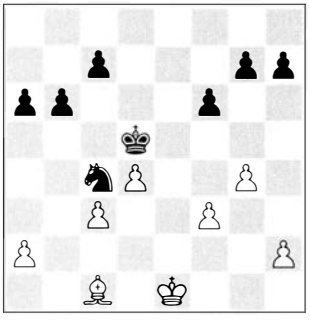
18...f6 19.♗a3 a6 20.♖bb1 ♘c6 21.♖be1

After 21.exd5 ♘a5 22.♗c1 ♘c4∓ Black controls the only open file, whilst he can create an outside passed pawn at any moment.

21...♘a5 22.g4 ♘c4 23.♗c1

Sad necessity; White has to retreat his bishop to its original square and go completely over to defence.

23...♖e7 24.exd5 ♖ae8 25.♖xe7+ ♖xe7 26.♔f2 ♔d6 27.♖e1 ♖xe1 28.♔xe1 ♔xd5



White has a very unpleasant, passive position, but even so, he should be able to hold.

29.♔e2 c5 30.dxc5 bxc5

30...♔xc5 also looks promising, but Black evidently did not wish to let his opponent activate his bishop, in a variation such as 31.h4 b5 32.h5 ♘e5 33.♗a3+ ♔c4 34.♗f8. The advantage is still with Black, but White has real counterplay.

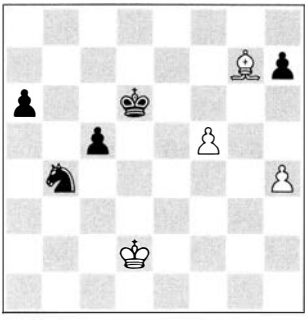
31.h4 ♘e5 32.♗f4 ♘g6 33.♗g3 ♔c4 34.♔d2 ♘e7 35.♗d6?!

It seems that after this move, White faces insurmountable problems. Correct was 35.♗c7!? ♘d5 36.♗a5 g6 37.♔c2 f5 38.gxf5 ♘e3+ 39.♔d2 ♘xf5 40.♗d8, and White holds the balance.

35...♘d5 36.♗f8 g6 37.♗g7 ♘xc3 38.♗xf6 ♘xa2

So as to free his bishop, White has had to surrender a pawn. Now he wishes to create a passed f-pawn, but the black king can easily stop it.

39.f4 ♔d5 40.f5 gxf5 41.gxf5 ♘b4 42.♗c3 ♔d6 43.♗g7



43...♔e7?

Black misses his chance. He should leave his king in the centre, and bring on the knight via e7 or d4, so as to force the enemy passed pawn to move. On the 6th rank, it is much more vulnerable, and the black king can attack it from the square e6. Events might develop as follows: 43...♘c6! 44.♔c3 (44.♗c3 ♘e7 45.f6 ♘d5 46.f7 ♔e7 47.♗a5 c4!, establishing an insurmountable barrier before the enemy king) 44...♔d5 45.h5 ♘d4 46.f6 ♘b5+ 47.♔b3 ♘d6−+. The f-pawn has been stopped and the white bishop is out of play.

44.♔c3 ♘d5+ 45.♔d3

Judging by Black's next move, he has been counting on 45.♔c4 ♘e3+

46.♔xc5 ♘xf5 47.♗e5 ♘xh4, and the king and knight have chances to outplay the lone bishop and escort the h-pawn to promotion.

45...c4+ 46.♔d4 ♔f7 47.♗e5

White has escaped from his major troubles. All of his pieces are centralised, whilst Black's pieces are scattered around the board.

47...♘e7 48.♔e4 h5

The assessment is not changed by 48...a5 49.♗c3 a4 50.h5 a3 51.♔d4 ♘xf5+ 52.♔xc4 ♘g3 53.♔b3 ♘xh5 54.♔xa3 – according to the five-man tablebase, it is a draw.

49.♗c3 ♘c8 50.♔d5 ♘b6+ 51.♔d4 ♘a4 52.♗d2 ♔f6 53.♔xc4 ♔xf5 54.♗g5 ♘b2+ 55.♔b4 ♘d3+ 56.♔a5 ♘e5 57.♔xa6 ♘f3 58.♗d8 ♔g4 59.♔b5 ♘xh4 60.♔c4 ♘f3 61.♔d3 h4 62.♗xh4 ½-½

Game 7
Beilin,Mikhail
Lipnitsky,Isaak
Riga - Dzintari 1950

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♗g5



Like 6.♘e5, this is an aggressive, principled move. Exploiting the fact that the opponent has brought his dark-squared bishop out to b4, White pins the knight on f6, and thereby strengthens the pressure against the d5 pawn. However, unlike in the variation with 6.♘e5, here White is not after the advantage of the two bishops, but is prepared himself to exchange bishop for knight, so as to complete his development as rapidly as possible. In addition, White is prepared to temporarily sacrifice the c4 pawn. Both sides have a mass of possibilities here, most of them virtually unexplored from the point of view of modern computer technique. It is quite likely that the fickle fashion in chess openings will soon start to devote more attention to this variation.

6...h6

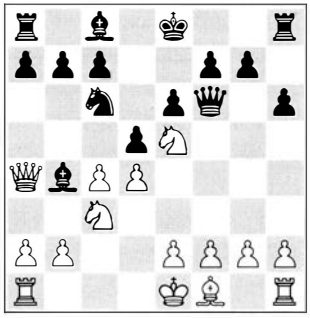
'The absence of a bishop on e7 makes the pin rather inconvenient for Black. Therefore, in the vast majority of cases in the Ragozin Defence, in reply to ♗c1-g5 the most common answer is ...h7-h6, immediately clarifying the position of the bishop' – Lipnitsky.
The main alternatives, **6...dxc4**, **6...0-0** and **6...♗d7**, will be examined later.

7.♗xf6

7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 leads to a transposition of moves.
Bad is **7.♗h4?** because of 7...♗d7!, threatening ...♘xd4 or ...g7-g5-g4 and then ...♘xd4. For example, 8.♕c2 g5 9.♗g3 g4 10.♘e5 ♘xd4 11.♕d3 ♘f5 12.e3 ♘xg3 13.hxg3 (Mishkin-Fuhro, Boston 1999) 13...c6∓.

7...♕xf6 8.♘e5?

Theory condemned this move long ago, and its assessment has not changed in recent years.



8...♗d7!

Nowadays this variation occupies the backyard of theory, and is very rarely met in games between the strongest players. It is impossible to remember everything in modern theory, but far from all players will play 8...♗d7! without preparation, since Black commits himself to having his king in the centre. Therefore, he sometimes plays the more solid move **8...0-0**, which leads only to equality: **9.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♗d7 11.cxd5 exd5 12.e3 ♗xc6 13.♕c2** The assessment is not changed by 13.♗b5 ♗xb5 14.♕xb5 ♕d6 15.0-0 b6 16.c4 c6 17.♕b3 dxc4 18.♕xc4 ♖fc8 19.♖fd1 ♖c7 20.♖ac1 ♖ac8 21.e4 c5 22.d5 ♖e7⇄ N.Sanchez-Arutinian, Colomiers 2008. **13...♕g5 14.g3 ♗d7 15.♗g2 ♗b5 16.♖b1 ♗a6 17.♗f1 ♗xf1 18.♔xf1 b6 19.♔g2 ♖fc8⇄** Pruess-Yermolinsky, Berkeley 2005.

9.♘xc6

White acknowledges that his knight raid was a simple waste of time, and goes over to defence.

After **9.♘xd7**, Black does not immediately recapture the knight, but first plays **9...♕xd4!**. The knight on d7 cannot get out, so Black can calmly help himself to a pawn or two: 10.♕c2 ♕xc4 11.e3 ♕h4 12.♗b5 ♔xd7, and although White has definite compensation, Black's two extra pawns eventually brought him victory in Khvalchev-Lipnitsky, USSR 1950.

9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♗xc6 11.♕b4 dxc4 12.♕xc4

Here is a 21st century example: **12.e3** 0-0-0 13.♕xc4 ♖d5 14.e4 ♖a5 15.♕b4 b6 16.♗d3 ♕g6 17.0-0 ♗xe4 18.♗xe4 ♕xe4∓ Van der Stricht-Atalik, Plovdiv 2003.

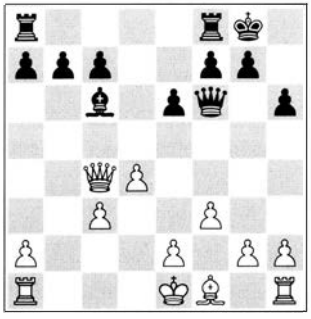
12...0-0

'Whilst Black has already finished the opening, White still has significant problems developing his kingside' – Lipnitsky.

More energetic play also deserves attention: **12...0-0-0** 13.♕c5 ♔b8 14.e3 ♖d5 15.♕c4 (Rmus-Delchev, Bijelo Polje 2005) 15...e5 16.e4 ♖b5 17.d5 ♖b2∓.

13.f3

White must close the long diagonal, since otherwise he cannot complete the development of his kingside.



13...e5

This move is tempting, because it is in Black's favour to open lines more quickly, so as to exploit his lead in development. But this general principle could point us in other directions, too. For example, a blow on the queenside deserves attention: **13...♗d5 14.♕d3 c5!?**. Or this plan: **13...♕g5** 14.♕d3 ♖ad8 15.♕d2 ♕e7 16.e3 e5 17.♗e2 ♖fe8 18.♔f2 ♕h4+ 19.g3 ♕f6 with a strong initiative for Black, Titov-Barle, Manila 1992.

14.d5

After 14.e4 there is the unpleasant reply 14...♕g5! (Dvoretsky) 15.d5 ♗d7 16.♔f2 (16.♕xc7? ♕e3+) 16...c6.

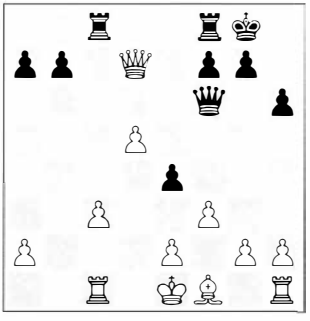
14...♗d7 15.♕xc7

After 15.e4 there would follow 15...c6, and Black opens the c-file. Even so, one can imagine that White underestimated his opponent's reply.

15...e4!

'In similar positions, such moves can often be found almost without any thought. Now White's dream of playing e2-e4 and uniting his pawns remains unrealisable' – Lipnitsky.

16.♖c1 ♖ac8! 17.♕xd7



17...e3!!

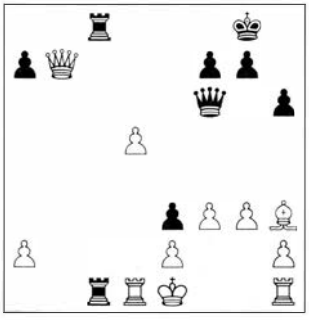
'This quiet move is the point of the combination. The black pawn, in going from e6 to e3, practically paralyses the whole white kingside. White's position is hopeless' – Lipnitsky.

Black not only threatens to take on c3, but there is also a more dangerous threat – 18...♕d4!.

18.♕a4

After 18.♕xb7 Black mates: 18...♖xc3 19.♕b2 ♖cc8! 20.♕a3 ♕h4+ 21.♔d1 (21.g3 ♕b4+!) 21...♖xc1+ 22.♔xc1 (22.♕xc1 ♕d4+ 23.♔e1 ♖b8 24.g3 ♖b1 25.♕xb1 ♕d2#) 22...♖c8+ 23.♔b2 ♕d4+ etc.

18...♖xc3 19.♖d1 ♖fc8 20.g3 ♖c1 21.♗h3



21...♖xd1+

Black avoids a cunning trap: 21...♕c3+ 22.♔f1 ♕d2? 23.♗xc8! ♖xd1+ 24.♔g2 ♕xe2+ 25.♔h3 ♖xh1 26.♕e8+ ♔h7 27.♗f5+, and it is White who gives mate.

22.♕xd1 ♕c3+

'The c-file serves as the artery, along which the black pieces penetrate the enemy position' – Lipnitsky.

23.♔f1 ♕d2! 24.♔g2

The ending after 24.♕xd2 exd2 25.♔f2 ♖c1 26.♔e3 ♖xh1 27.♔xd2

♖xh2 should be won for Black without any great problems.

24...♖c1!

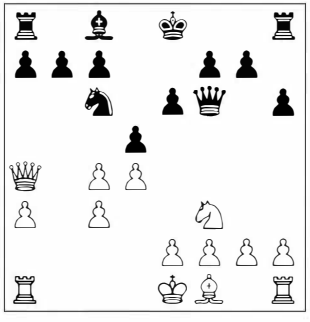
'Completing Black's idea. White resigned, not waiting for mate in two after 25.♕xc1 ♕xe2+ and 26...♕f2#. The game was awarded a special prize as the best in the tournament' – Lipnitsky.

Game 8
Makogonov,Vladimir
Keres,Paul
Leningrad 1947

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.a3

Exploiting the fact that the pawn on d5 is insufficiently defended, White forces the exchange of the bishop.

8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3



9...♗d7

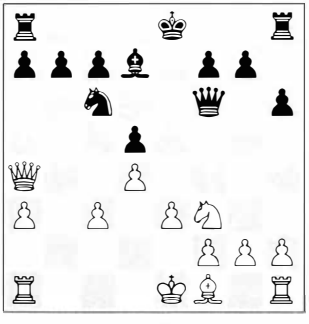
The typical Ragozin plan of exchanging on c4 and playing ...e6-e5 does not give Black full equality: **9...dxc4 10.e3 0-0 11.♗xc4 e5** After 11...a6 12.0-0 ♗d7, as was played in the game Kir. Georgiev-Inkiov, Sofia 1984, White could have retained somewhat the better chances with 13.♗d3 ♖ab8 14.h3 ♕e7 15.♕c2±. **12.0-0 ♗g4 13.♗d5!** A manoeuvre to remember – White not only defends the knight on f3, but also attacks the knight on c6 and prevents the advance ...e5-e4. **13...♗d7 14.♕b3** Here White could perfectly well have won a pawn: 14.♘xe5! ♘xe5 15.dxe5 ♕e7 16.♕e4 c6 17.♗c4±. **14...exd4 15.cxd4 ♖ab8 16.♖ac1 ♖fc8 17.♖c3 ♘a5 18.♕c2 c6 19.♘e5±** V.Makogonov-Ragozin, Tbilisi 1937.
Also possible is **9...0-0 10.e3** – this position is examined in the game Makogonov-Romanovsky, via another move-order: 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 0-0 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.e3.

10.cxd5 exd5

This position also arises in the variation 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♗d7 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 (in fact, this is how the game Makogonov-Keres developed).

11.♕b3

'An inaccuracy. The attack on two black pawns is easily repulsed, so it was better to continue development with 11.e3 0-0 12.♗d3, without wasting time' – Lipnitsky.
Let us examine this line in more detail, insofar as practical experience permits:
11.e3



Analysis diagram

11...0-0

The immediate 11...♕d6, defending the d5 pawn, also looks solid, e.g. 12.♗d3 (12.♕b3 ♗f5 leads by transposition to Makogonov-Keres) 12...0-0 13.0-0 b6 (preparing to move the knight away and advance ...c7-c5) 14.♕c2 ♘e7 (Black is not to be the first to start play on the queenside: 14...♘a5 15.♘e5 c5 16.♘xd7 ♕xd7 17.dxc5 bxc5 18.♖fd1±) 15.c4 c5 16.cxd5 (White keeps a small, almost symbolic advantage after 16.dxc5 ♕xc5 17.cxd5 ♕xc2 18.♗xc2 ♘xd5 19.♗e4 ♗e6 20.♘d4) 16...♘xd5?! (it is not clear why Black did not agree to a position with an isolated pawn. After the simple 16...♖ac8! 17.♗a6 ♖c7 18.♕d3 ♘xd5 the chances are equal) 17.dxc5 ♕xc5 18.♕xc5 bxc5 (Atalik-Akobian, San Francisco 2002) 19.♘e5 ♗a4 20.♖fc1±.

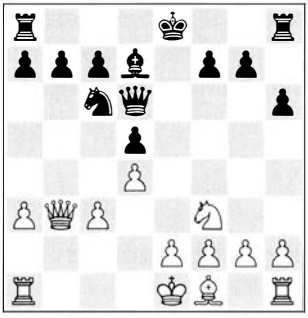
After 11...0-0 White has tried various moves, but Black should not have any great problems maintaining equality in any variation. His main task is to prevent the opening of the game with c3-c4, therefore his correct plan consists in ...b7-b6, ...♘c6-a5 and at the first convenient opportunity, ...c7-c5. For example:

A) **12.♕b3** ♕d6 13.♗d3 b6 14.0-0 ♖ad8 15.♕c2 ♗g4 16.♘d2, Gretarsson-Alonso Garcia, Havana 2002, 16...♘a5 17.h3 ♗e6⇄;

B) **12.♗d3 ♗g4 13.♘e5!?** By exploiting a small tactical nuance in the position, the white knight advances, rather than retreating. **13...♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♕e6** 14...♕xe5? 15.♕xg4 ♕xc3+ 16.♔e2 ♕b2+ 17.♔f3±. **15.0-0 c5⇄** Kärner-G.Kuzmin, Tallinn 1988;

C) **12.♗e2** ♕d6 13.0-0 b6 14.♕d1 ♘a5 15.♘e5 ♗e6 16.♗d3 ♘c4 17.♘xc4 dxc4 18.♗e4 ♗d5= Aseev-Sosonko, St. Petersburg 1997.

11...♕d6!



12.e3

Taking the Trojan Horse with 12.♕xb7?! is extremely risky, because of 12...♖b8 13.♕a6 0-0 14.e3 ♕g6 with more than sufficient compensation for the pawn: it is hard for White to complete his development, whilst the enemy forces are getting ready to penetrate on the open files and diagonals.

12...♗f5!

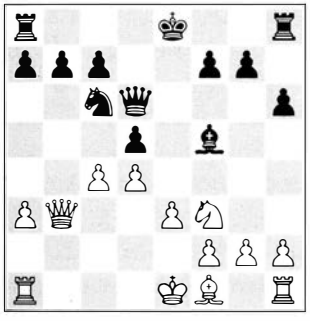
'An instructive moment! In the opening, many young players rush to castle as soon as possible, without regard to the concrete requirements of the position. Now, for example, castling was premature, since then the white bishop would seize the diagonal b1-h7. Now this diagonal is under Black's control' – Lipnitsky.

13.♗e2

'The variation employed by White in this game is not worth following. Black has completed his mobilisation, which allows him to go over to the plan of a queenside pawn advance. White already

needs to think about equalising. Now Black cannot play 13...♘a5 because of 14.♕b5+, but instead of the text move, it was worth considering 13.c4!, in order to exchange the d5 pawn and in the process to assist the later advance of the white central pawns. In addition, the c-file would be opened, which White threatens to occupy with his rook. After 13.c4! dxc4 (not 13...♗e6 because of 14.c5!) 14.♗xc4 the chances would be equal. White's passive play allows Black to seize the advantage' – Lipnitsky.

It seems to me that these assessments need a little correcting. The move 13.♗e2 does not lose equality (the white position remains very solid), whilst after **13.c4!** White could have fought for the advantage (although admittedly, to do so he would have to undertake a rather risky operation). Here is a small analysis of the position after 13.c4!:



Analysis diagram

13...dxc4 13...0-0 14.c5 ♕d7 15.♕xb7!?±. **14.♗xc4 0-0** Black wants to play ...♘a5 with comfortable play, but White can display insolence and take the pawn with **15.♕xb7!?**. Of course, pawn-snatching with an uncastled king looks rather adventurous, but I have not been able to find a clear refutation. Maybe the reader will manage to do so, but for now, here are a couple of variations: **15...♗e4 16.0-0 ♗xf3** 16...♖ab8 17.♕a6 ♕g6 18.♘e1; the pawn on d4 prevents Black bringing the knight into the attack with decisive effect. **17.gxf3 ♖ab8 18.♕a6 ♖b6 19.♕a4 ♕f6 20.♗e2 ♖b2 21.♖ac1! ♘xd4 22.♕xd4 ♕xd4 23.exd4 ♖xe2 24.♖xc7±**.

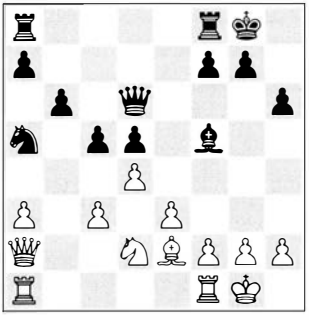
13...0-0 14.0-0 b6

Now that the white king has left the centre, the pawn on b7 could be taken without great risk.

15.♘d2 ♘a5 16.♕a2?!

Too modest a role for the queen. Now Black seizes the initiative in the centre. Preferable was 16.♕b4 c5 17.dxc5 ♕xc5 18.♘f3 with a roughly equal game; White has a weak pawn on c3, Black on d5.

16...c5!



So, Black starts a 'majority attack'. All of his pieces are active (at least, by comparison with their opposite numbers) and soon Black will have a space advantage. White is condemned to passive defence, and it is difficult for him to play either c3-c4, or e3-e4.

17.♘b3?

'Now the exchange of knights plays into Black's hands. He is attacking on the queenside and can vary his plans. Maybe he will double rooks on the c-file and penetrate to the 6th or 7th rank, or maybe he will advance his pawns with ...c5-c4, ...b6-b5, ...a6-a5 followed by ...b5-b4. White should oppose this by trying at all costs to achieve the advance e3-e4, to get counterplay. And for this, the knight on d2 occupies an ideal position. It follows from this that instead of the text, White should play 17.♗f3 so as to: 1. prepare the advance e3-e4; 2. tie one of the black rooks to the defence of the d5 pawn, and thereby hamper their idea of penetrating on the c-file' – Lipnitsky.

However, the variations show that it is already very hard to get in e3-e4. Black has a firm grip on the initiative:

A) **17.♗f3** ♖ad8 18.♖fe1 ♗d3!∓;

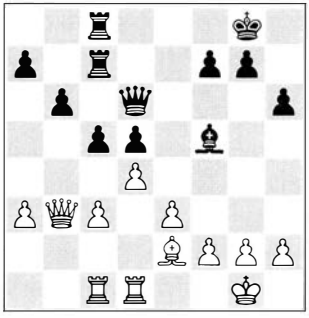
B) **17.dxc5 bxc5!** After 17...♕xc5 18.♖ac1 ♖ac8 19.♖fd1 ♖fd8 20.♘b3! ♘xb3 21.♕xb3 the weaknesses on c3 and d5 balance each other out. **18.♖fd1 ♖fd8 19.♘c4 ♘xc4 20.♗xc4 ♗e4 21.♗d3** The tactics do not work: 21.f3? ♗xf3 22.gxf3 ♕g6+ 23.♔h1 dxc4∓. **21...♕e5∓**.

17...♘xb3 18.♕xb3 ♖ac8 19.♖ac1

White is now deprived of all counterplay, but, as we have already pointed out, his position remains very solid.

19...♖c7 20.♖fd1 ♖fc8

Black's basic idea is ...c5-c4 followed by the advance of the a- and b-pawns. But Keres does not want to play this at once, because in this case, he would take the pressure off the d4 pawn and make it easier for his opponent to obtain counterplay in the centre by e3-e4. Therefore he first tries another plan: he doubles rooks on the c-file, threatening to exchange on d4.



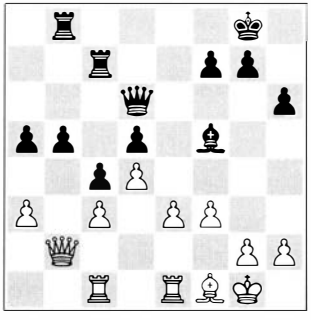
21.♗a6 ♖b8 22.♗f1

Defending against ...b6-b5, trapping the bishop. White stubbornly refrains from the exchange on c5, so as not to be left with a weak pawn on c3. But is it all that weak? After all, the black pawn on d5 also needs to be defended. After 22.dxc5!? ♖xc5 23.♗d3 ♗xd3 24.♖xd3 ♖bc8 25.♖cd1 ♕e5 26.♕a2∓ White should hold the position.

22...c4 23.♕b2 b5 24.♖e1 a5

Thus, Black has started on the realisation of his principal plan: preparing the break ...b5-b4.

25.f3



There is nothing else – White must prepare the central counter e3-e4. But the Black pieces are very well placed (note that he has one rook on the 8th rank and one on the 7th; if need be, both can quickly come to the e-file) and he easily prevents this idea.

25...♖e7 26.♖a1

'By protecting the a3 pawn, White frees his queen. In addition, after the break ...b5-b4 the white rook will have an open file. But this is still just a defensive manoeuvre in a difficult position' – Lipnitsky.

26...g5!

'Before going over to decisive actions, Black tries to strengthen his position to the maximum, and deprive White of any counter-chances. Now he threatens 27...♗g6 followed by ...f7-f5, which allows Black to combine threats on the queenside with pressure on the e-file' – Lipnitsky.

27.e4?!

'So as to escape from a slow agony, White sacrifices a pawn, so as to complicate things at all costs' – Lipnitsky.
From a human standpoint, White's decision is perfectly understandable; probably time-trouble was also approaching, and in time-trouble it is even harder to stand and wait, and one always wants to clarify the position. But objectively, the text significantly worsens the white position, whereas after 27.g3 (with the idea of ♗g2 and e3-e4) he could still resist stubbornly.

27...dxe4 28.a4 b4! 29.fxe4

After 29.♗xc4, 29...♖c8 is very strong, e.g.: 30.♕e2 bxc3 31.♖ad1 c2–+.

29...♖xe4 30.♖xe4 ♗xe4 31.♗xc4 ♖c8 32.♕e2

Nor does 32.♕a2 bxc3 33.♗xf7+ ♔g7 save White.

32...♗g6 33.♗d3 ♗xd3 34.♕xd3 ♖xc3 35.♕e4 b3 36.♖f1 ♕e6



Black defends the f7 pawn and offers to go into a rook ending, in which he will have an extra passed pawn.

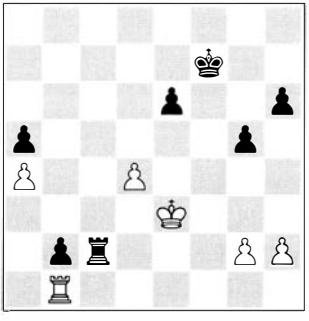
37.♕xe6

He has to agree to the exchange. He cannot keep his queen in the centre and retreating it to a8 or h1 is completely prospectless.

37..fxe6 38.♖b1 ♔f7 39.♔f2 ♖c2+

Also possible was 39...e5 40.dxe5 ♔e6 41.♔e2 ♔xe5, although the game continuation is certainly no worse.

40.♔e3 b2



Black's plan is very simple: he wants to bring his king via d5 and c4 to the assistance of the b2 pawn. If White opposes this by bringing his own king to the queenside, then he loses both kingside pawns.

41.h3 ♔e7 42.g4 ♔d6 43.♔e4 ♖h2

Zugzwang, thanks to which Black wins a second pawn.

44.d5 exd5+ 45.♔d4 ♖g2 46.♔c3 ♔c5 47.♖f1 d4+ 48.♔b3 ♖f2 49.♖e1 d3 50.♔a2 ♔c4 51.♖e8 d2

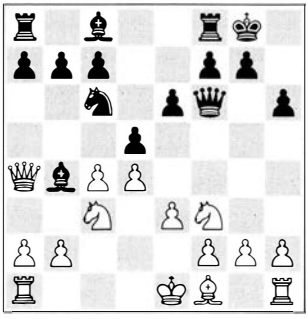
White resigned.

'In this game, Keres gives a superbly clear demonstration of one of the main strategic ideas of the Ragozin Defence – a queenside pawn advance' – Lipnitsky.

Game 9
Malakhov,Vladimir
Yu Shaoteng
Beijing 2010

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.d4 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.e3 0-0

The move **8...♗d7** is not quite in the spirit of the position. Black's basic task is to play ...e6-e5 and open the path of his light-squared bishop to f5 or g4, and in this case, the move ...♗d7 turns out to be a loss of tempo. Possible then is: **9.♕c2 0-0 10.a3!** On 10.♖c1 Black has the tactical resource 10...e5! 11.dxe5 (Black's idea is seen in the variation 11.cxd5? ♘xd4! 12.exd4 exd4∓) 11...♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♕xe5 13.a3 (13.♕b3!?) 13...♗f5 14.♕b3?! (equality results from 14.♕d2 ♗xc3 15.♕xc3=) 14...♗a5 15.cxd5 ♗e4 16.♕a4 ♗xc3+ 17.♖xc3 ♖ad8 18.f3 ♕xd5 19.♗e2 ♕d2+ 20.♔f2 ♗d3∓ Zoler-Kupreichik, Graz 2002. **10...♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 ♖ae8 12.cxd5** Also good is 12.♗e2 dxc4 13.♕xc4±. **12...exd5 13.♗e2 ♕d6 14.♖c1 ♖e7 15.♕c5! ♕xc5 16.♖xc5 ♗e6 17.♔d2±** P. Cramling-Sadler, London 1986. This is the sort of endgame White is striving for against the Ragozin. He has pressure on the queenside, a good bishop and more active king. However, Black still has many defensive resources and after **17...♘b8!? 18.♖hc1 c6** he should hold.



9.♗e2

'White does not prevent Black from playing ...e6-e5, which allows the latter to open the centre and free the bishop on c8' – Lipnitsky.

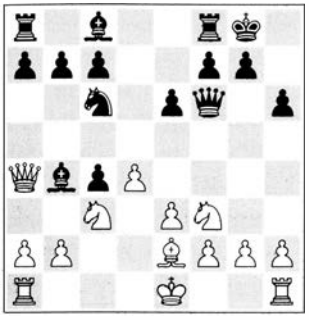
The alternative is **9.♖c1**, trying to gain a tempo on the game. In order to play ...e6-e5, Black must exchange on c4, and then White will recapture with the bishop in one move. However, Black is not obliged to exchange at once and can wait:

A) **9...♖d8** 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗e2 a6 12.0-0 ♗f8 13.a3 ♘e7 (a direct, but not a bad plan: Black simply brings pieces over to the kingside) 14.b4 ♗g4 15.♕d1 ♗xf3 16.gxf3 c6 17.♔h1

♘f5⇄ Mamedyarov-Bartel, Moscow 2009;

B) **9...a6** Black prepares the exchange on c4, followed by ...♗d6, and defends the b5-square in advance, to stop the knight harassing his bishop. In addition, in many lines, ...b7-b5 is a threat. **10.a3** Forcing the exchange of the bishop, because the d5 pawn would otherwise be hanging. **10...♗xc3+ 11.♖xc3 dxc4 12.♕xc4 e5 13.d5 ♘e7 14.♗d3 ♖d8 15.♗e4 b5 16.♕xc7 ♘xd5 17.♗xd5** draw, Dreev-Dizdar, Kallithea 2008;

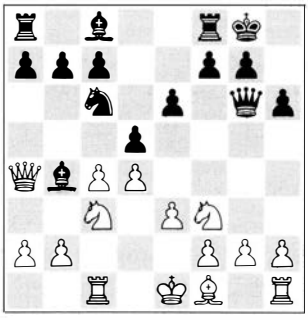
C) **9...dxc4**



Analysis diagram

Black announces that he is not interested in fighting over a tempo, and quietly gets on with his business. However, the tempo saved can be useful for White. **10.♗xc4 ♗d7** After 10...e5 unpleasant is 11.d5 ♗xc3+ 12.♖xc3 ♘e7 13.0-0 e4 (Ikonnikov-Delemarre, Vlissingen 2007) 14.♘d4!? ♖d8 15.♕c2 ♕e5 16.f4 exf3 17.♘xf3 ♕d6 18.e4±. **11.0-0 ♗xc3** Worthy of attention is 11...♕g6 12.♕d1 ♗d6 13.♗d3 f5⇄. **12.♖xc3 ♖fd8** Black defends the bishop on d7 and is now threatening to capture on d4 with the knight. **13.♕c2** Also good is 13.♕b3!?, not fearing the exchange of bishop for knight, e.g.: 13...♘a5 14.♕b4 ♘xc4 15.♕xc4±. **13...♗e8 14.♕e4 g6 15.♗b3 ♖ac8 16.♖fc1±** Gausel-Brynell, Gothenburg 1998;

D) **9...♕g6**

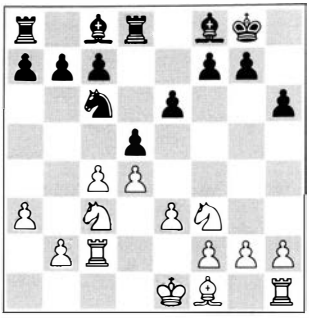


Analysis diagram

The queen takes aim at the pawn on g2 and prevents the normal development of the opponent's light-squared bishop.

D1) Lively play begins after **10.h4!?**, e.g.: **10...dxc4** 10...♗d7 11.♕b3 a5 12.a3 a4 13.♕d1 ♗a5 14.♗d3 ♕f6 15.g4!? e5 16.g5 ♕d6⇄ (Bosboom-N.Kosintseva, Wijk aan Zee 2007) A central blow against a flank attack is the classical recipe! **11.h5 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♕f6 13.♗xc4 ♗d7 14.♕d1 ♖ad8 15.♘d2** The correct regrouping – White transfers his queen to f3, whilst the knight is ready to go via e4-c5. **15...e5 16.♕f3 ♕e7 17.0-0 ♔h8⇄** Dreev-Khuzman, Rethymnon 2003. Later Black played ...f7-f5 and forced his opponent to clarify things in the centre;

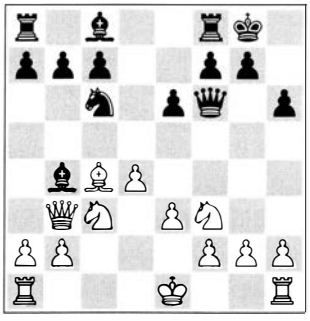
D2) **10.♕c2 ♕xc2** Black could keep queens on the board, at the cost of exchanging bishop for knight, but then White would be fine in the middlegame: 10...♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 a5 12.a3 a4 13.g3 ♕e4 14.♗g2 e5 15.0-0 ♗h3 16.♗xh3 ♕xf3 17.♗g2 exd4 (Zhu Chen-A.Mastrovasilis, Athens 2006) 18.♕d2! dxe3 19.fxe3 ♕h5 20.cxd5 ♖ad8 21.e4±. **11.♖xc2 ♖d8 12.a3 ♗f8**



Analysis diagram

White has a little more space and it is easier for him to complete his development. Black has two bishops and a sound pawn structure. In this complicated endgame, reached after just 12 moves, White has a slight initiative, but it is not so hard to neutralise, e.g. **13.♘b5** 13.♗e2 a6 14.0-0 ♘b8 15.♖fc1 c6 16.♘a4 ♘d7 17.♘e5 ♘xe5 18.dxe5 ♗d7 19.♘b6 ♖ab8 20.♗g4 ♗e8= Buhmann-Gajewski, Polanica Zdroj 2007. **13...♖d7** An ugly move, but what else? Black will drive the knight away from b5 and then return the rook. **14.cxd5 exd5 15.♗d3 a6 16.♘c3 ♖d8 17.0-0 ♘b8 18.♖b1 a5 19.h3 c6=** Bacrot-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

After **9.♕b3 dxc4 10.♗xc4** Black starts to carry out the standard Ragozin plan:



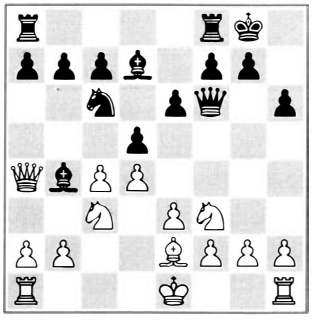
Analysis diagram

10...♗d6 11.♗b5 Black has an excellent position in the variation 11.♘b5?! ♘a5 12.♕c3 ♘xc4 13.♕xc4 ♗d7. **11...♘e7** Black does not want to spoil his pawn formation, so he transfers the knight to g6 and only then plays the thematic break ...e6-e5. **12.0-0 ♘g6 13.♘e4 ♕e7 14.♗d3** Worth consideration was 14.♖ac1 e5 15.♗c4±. **14...b6 15.♘xd6 cxd6** As we have seen, in the Ragozin neither side should usually be frightened of exchanging a bishop for a knight, and here Black gets rid of his weak pawn on a half-open file. **16.d5 e5** 16...♘e5!? 17.♘d4 exd5⇄. **17.♗xg6 fxg6 18.♘d2 g5 19.♖ac1 ♗a6 20.♖fe1 e4⇄** Ljubojevic-Milov, Villarrobledo 2001 (rapid). The variation 9.cxd5 exd5 is examined in the game Mamedyarov-Elianov.

9...♗d7

Black sets a small trap along the way: after **10.0-0?** there follows **10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♘xd4!**.

After **9...dxc4 10.0-0 ♗d7 11.♗xc4** the bishop on e2 is not hanging in the air and Black should carry out his basic plan: **11...♗d6 12.♘e4 ♕e7 13.♕c2** Again ...♘xd4 was threatened. **13...e5 14.♘xd6 cxd6 15.d5 ♘d8** Possibly 15...♘a5 is stronger, but the knight is less stable on e5. **16.♖ac1 f5 17.♕b3 f4 18.exf4 ♖xf4 19.g3 ♖f8 20.♕e3 ♖c8 21.♗d3±** Lin Weiguo-Landa, Beijing 1997. Black has less space but his biggest problem is the terrible knight on d8.



10.♕b3

White moves his queen out of the attack from the bishop on d7, but at the same time keeps an eye on the bishop b4. Weaker is **10.♕c2**, since after **10...dxc4** (without this exchange, Black cannot get in ...e6-e5) **11.♗xc4** the black knight is not tied to the defence of the bishop on b4, and so he can play **11...e5!**. 'Black has completed his development and his rooks have at their disposal half-open central files. By attacking the white centre, Black strives to take over the initiative' – Lipnitsky. **12.0-0** After 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♕xe5 14.0-0 ♗d6 Black forces the weakening move g2-g3, after which he tries to develop an attack on the kingside. **12...exd4 13.♘d5 ♕d6 14.♖ad1** (Castillo Larenas-Alekhine, Buenos Aires 1939) **14...♗g4!** with very promising play for Black.

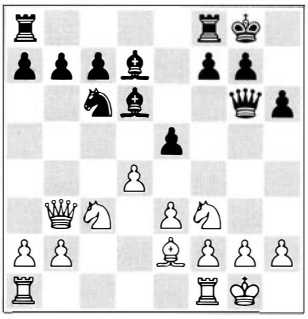
10...dxc4 11.♗xc4

In an old game between not very well-known Swiss players, White obtained an advantage after 11.♕xc4 ♖fe8 12.0-0 ♗xc3 13.♕xc3 ♖ad8 14.♖ac1 ♕e7 15.a3 ♕d6 16.♖fd1 ♖e7 17.♘e5 ♗e8 18.♗f3± Summermatter-Allegro, Switzerland 1987, but both sides' play can probably be strengthened.

11...♗d6 12.♗e2

The position of the queen on b3 also has its drawbacks – he has to spend a tempo meeting the threat of the fork ...♘a5.

12...♕g6 13.0-0 e5



Black has realised the basic idea of the opening and has obtained fully adequate play.

14.d5

After 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♗xe5 16.f4 ♗xc3 17.♕xc3 ♖fe8 Black also has no problems.

14...♘a5

I prefer another plan – 14...♘e7 15.♖fd1 a6 16.♘d2 b5, but this is a matter of taste.

15.♕d1 e4 16.♘h4 ♕h7

It looks more natural to transfer the queen to the centre: 16...♕f6 17.g3 ♕e5 with mutual chances. But the text move is also not bad – Black creates the threat of ...g7-g5.

17.♕b1

White attacks the e4 pawn and prepares b2-b4; the black knight is equally badly placed.

17...♖ae8 18.f3

After 18.b4 Black has the 'symmetrical' reply 18...g5! with sufficient counterplay, but after the text move White could find himself in difficulties. As well as 18.b4, the move 18.g3 is good, ensuring the knight a retreat.

18...g5!

Black also obtains a small advantage after 18...♗e7, e.g. 19.b4 (19.♕e1 exf3 20.♘xf3 ♗c5 21.♘d1 ♗xe3+ 22.♘xe3 ♖xe3∓) 19...♗xh4 20.♘xe4 ♗f5 21.♗d3 c6 22.d6 ♗xe4 23.fxe4 ♕g6 24.e5 ♕g5 25.bxa5 ♕xe5∓.

19.♘xe4 ♗e7?!

A mistake in a sharp position. The bishop should have gone to the long diagonal, threatening to win the exchange: 19...♗e5! 20.f4 (20.b4 gxh4 21.bxa5 ♕g7! – maybe the Chinese player missed this move; Black not only wants to win the exchange, but to exchange queens at the same time) 20...♗h8 21.♘c5 ♕xb1 22.♖axb1 ♗c8∓.

20.b4 gxh4 21.bxa5 f5?!



As a result of combinational complications, White has won a pawn, but realising it is not simple: Black has two bishops, and White has several weaknesses. The sharp move in the game exposes his own king and gives Black additional problems. He should have played the more modest 21...♕g7!?.

22.d6! cxd6

Black could have regained the pawn at once, but then he would have had to play a heavy piece endgame, with a bad king: 22...♗xd6 23.♘xd6 cxd6 24.♕xb7 ♖xe3 25.♗c4+ ♗e6 26.♗xe6+ ♖xe6 27.♕b4±.

23.♕xb7 ♗e6 24.♘d2! ♗f6 25.♕xh7+ ♔xh7 26.♖ad1 ♗xa2 27.♗c4! ♗xc4 28.♘xc4 ♖c8 29.♘xd6 ♖c5

The long forcing variation has ended. White has an extra pawn and every chance of winning.

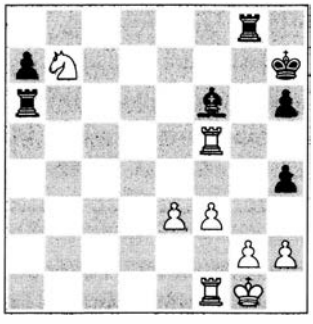
30.♘b7 ♖c7 31.a6 ♖c6 32.♖d5?!

An exchange of mistakes starts, probably because of time-trouble. After 32.♖d6! ♖fc8 (32...♖c2!?) 33.♖fd1 White retains all the advantages of his position.

32...♖xa6?!

Here Black could equalise the game: 32...♖e8! 33.♖e1 ♗g5.

33.♖xf5 ♖g8



34.h3?!

It is unpleasant to have the threat of ...h4-h3 hanging over one the whole time. White wants to place his rook on f2 and his king on h2. This idea is perfectly understandable, but it proves unrealisable. Correct was 34.♖c1 ♖a2 35.g4!±.

34...♗c3

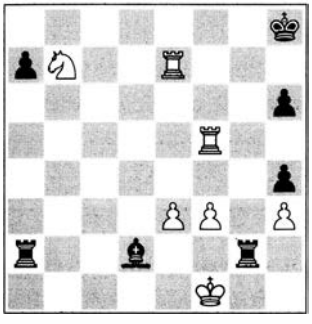
More accurate was 34...♖a2, e.g.: 35.g4 (35.♖f2 ♖a1+ 36.♔h2 ♗c3! – on account of the threat of ...♗c3-e1-g3 White must already think of equality) 35...♖c8 36.♖c5 (36.♘c5 ♗d8 37.♖f2 ♖a1+ 38.♔g2 ♗b6 – Black's initiative compensates for the missing pawn) 36...♖xc5 37.♘xc5 ♖e2, and the draw is practically unavoidable.

35.♖c1 ♗d2 36.♖c7+ ♔h8 37.♖e7 ♖a1+ 38.♔f2 ♖a2

White has succeeded in creating threats to the opposing king, but Black had a fairly accurate path to equality: 38...♗b4! 39.♘c5 ♖a2+ 40.♔f1 ♖gxg2 41.♖f8+ ♖g8 42.♖ff7 ♖a1+ 43.♔f2 (43.♔e2? ♖g2+ 44.♔d3 ♗xc5–+) 43...♖a2+.

39.♔f1 ♖xg2?

A mistake, which puts Black in real trouble. Correct was 39...♗b4 40.♘c5 ♖gxg2=.



40.♔xg2?

By exploiting the fact that the black pieces have not yet established coordination (the bishop disrupts the rooks), White could bring his knight into the attack: 40.♘d6! ♗c3 41.♖f8+ ♖g8 42.♘f7+ ♔g7 43.♖xg8+ ♔xg8 44.♘xh6+ ♔f8 45.♖c7 with serious winning chances.

40...♗b4+ 41.♔f1 ♗xe7 42.e4 ♔g7 43.♖a5 ♖h2 44.♖xa7 ♖xh3

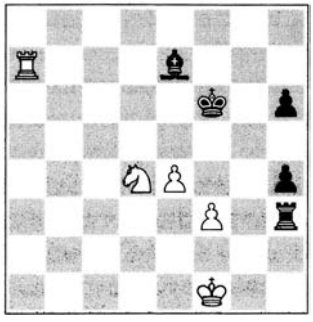
More accurate is 44...♔f6 45.f4 ♖xh3 46.♖a6+ ♔g7=.

45.♘d8! ♔f8?

Only this move loses. Black could still draw by giving up the bishop, but eliminating the two enemy pawns: 45...♔f6 46.e5+ ♔xe5 47.♖xe7+ ♔f4 48.♖f7+ ♔e3 49.♔g2 ♖g3+ 50.♔h2 ♖xf3.

46.♘e6+ ♔f7 47.♘d4 ♔f6

This move is forced because of the threat of 48.♘f5.



48.♖xe7! ♔xe7 49.♘f5+ ♔f6 50.♔g2

An unexpected end to a long and hard-fought game – the black rook is trapped!

50...♖xf3 51.♔xf3 h3 52.♘xh6 1-0

Game 10
Mamedyarov,Shakhriyar
Elianov,Pavel
Astrakan 2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.cxd5

'This exchange, which is possible in many variations of the Ragozin Defence, stabilises the central position' – Lipnitsky.

8...exd5



9.e3

Even after the preliminary exchange on d5, the jump **9.♘e5** is not dangerous for Black. He has two promising plans:

A) **9...♗d7 10.♘xc6** Many years ago, Estrin suggested 10.♘xd7!? ♕xd4 11.♕b3 ♘a5 12.♕c2 ♔xd7 13.♖d1 with the initiative for the pawn. I do not even know if this has been tested in practice. **10...♗xc3+** 10...a5 11.e3 0-0 12.♗e2 ♗xc6 13.♕c2 ♗d7 14.a3 ♗f5 15.♗d3 ♗xc3+ 16.♕xc3 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3 c6= Ivkov-Olafsson, Amsterdam 1976. **11.bxc3 ♗xc6 12.♕a3 h5 13.h4 ♖h6 14.♖h3 ♕d6 15.♖e3+ ♔f8 16.♕xd6+ ♖xd6 17.♖b1 g6=** Biyiasas-Spassky, Manila 1976;

B) **9...0-0!** This simple developing move is even more promising. **10.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 bxc6!** 'This is stronger than 11...♗d7. Since Black is better developed, he needs lines for attack' – Lipnitsky. **12.g3** 12.e3 ♕g6 13.♕d1 ♗f5∓ Koch-Zemerov, Budapest 1995. **12...a5 13.♕d1 ♖e8 14.♗g2 ♗a6 15.e3 ♕g6∓** Trentini-Mitkov, Bolzano 1998.

9...0-0

9...♗f5 10.♗e2 0-0 – see 9...0-0 10.♗e2 ♗f5.

All the while Black has not castled, he cannot play **9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 b6?** because of **11.♘e5±**.

In the following game, Black tried the plan with queenside castling, but it does not look very well-founded positionally: **9...♗d7** 10.♕c2 ♗f5 11.♗d3 ♗xd3 12.♕xd3 0-0-0 13.a3 ♗xc3+ 14.♕xc3 ♕e6 15.♖c1 f6 16.b4± Terentiev-Ryzhkov, Ozery 1997.

10.♗e2

The most popular move. True, Black now has the possibility of 10...♗xc3+!? 11.bxc3 b6...



Analysis diagram

followed by play on the light squares on the queenside. Because of this, various players consider **10.♖c1** to be more accurate, which we will see in the example Mamedyarov-Kramnik.

10.♗b5 ♗g4 11.♗xc6 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♗xf3 13.gxf3 bxc6 14.♔e2 ♖fb8 15.♖ab1 ♕f5 16.♕d1 ♖b6∓ Hulak-Sulava, Sibenik 2009.

10.♗d3 ♗g4 11.♘e5 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 draw, Browne-Sosonko, Wijk aan Zee 1981.

10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3

'It is said that the highest art in chess is the ability to play simple positions. In this, at first sight quiet and harmless position, Black should display great care and attention, since the outward simplicity of the position is, as usual, extremely deceptive. White has created a positional threat, the essence of which is this: with the advance c3-c4 to exchange off the last black central pawn, and then organise strong pressure with his rooks along the open b- and c-files. After the necessary preparation, White will then set his central pawns in motion.

In many seemingly simple positions, one of the sides will have some similar threat, at the basis of which lie not concrete tactical variations, but subtle positional considerations, and on the basis of which a definite plan is constructed. In such situations, it is extremely important to look for and recognise the opponent's positional threats, so as to be able to oppose them with one's own plans. After routine piece development, one can unexpectedly find oneself in a difficult position, often without understanding what has led to this' – Lipnitsky.



11...b6!

'Measures are taken! Now the move c3-c4 is not dangerous for Black. At the same time, this hard-to-find-move is the basis of an interesting counter-plan. Black is aiming not only to neutralise the opponent's positional threat, but also to take the initiative on the queenside, where he has a pawn majority.

The move ...b7-b6 is based on the following considerations:

1. The knight on c6 obtains the possibility of coming to a5, to attack the weak white queenside.

2. But the main thing is: the advance ...c7-c5! is prepared, which lies at the basis of Black's pawn advance on the queenside. And, this as we know, is one of the basic strategic ideas of the Ragozin Defence' – Lipnitsky.

Even so, as well as ...b7-b6, Black has another good move in 11...♕g6, so as in purely mechanical fashion to prevent the opponent developing his kingside. So far, White has not found a reliable response to this move: 12.♘h4 (12.♕d1 ♖e8 13.♖b1 ♖e7 14.♖b5 ♕d6 15.♕b3 ♖b8 16.♗e2 a6 17.♖xd5 ♗e6 18.c4 ♗xd5 19.cxd5 ♘a7 20.0-0 c6 21.dxc6 ♘xc6 22.♗d3 b5∓ Aseev-Greenfeld, St. Petersburg 1999; 12.♖c1 ♖d8 13.♘d2 ♖b8 14.g3 ♗f5 15.♗e2 ♗d3 16.♕d1 ♗xe2 17.♕xe2 ♕d6, and in this slightly superior position for Black, the players agreed a draw, Tunik-Kosyrev, Krasnodar 2002) 12...♕e4 13.♘f3 ♕g6 14.♘h4 ♕h5 15.♘f3 ♗g4 16.♗e2 ♖ae8 17.h3 ♗c8 18.0-0-0 ♕g6 19.g4 a6 20.♕b3 ♕d6 21.♖dg1 b5 22.♘e1 ♘a5 23.♕b4 draw, Shainswit-Bisguier, New York 1951.

12.c4

As we already know, it is useful for White to remove the d5 pawn, so as not to fall under a press on the queenside. Therefore weaker is 12.♗d3 ♗b7 (12...♗g4 13.♘d2 ♘e7 14.0-0 ♗f5

15.♗xf5 ♕xf5 16.c4 ♖fc8 17.♖fe1 – White has preserved a slight opening initiative, but the position is close to equality) 13.0-0 ♘a5 14.♘e5 ♕d6!.

'Black will carry out the advance ...c7-c5 and create good prospects on the queenside, where he has a pawn majority. Keres demonstrated a successful implementation of this plan of a queenside pawn advance, combined with effective measures to suppress his opponent's central counterplay, in his game with Makogonov (Leningrad 1947)' – Lipnitsky.

12...dxc4 13.♗xc4

The alternative is 13.♕xc4 ♗b7 14.♗e2. In his book, Lipnitsky presents a very interesting analysis of this position, which seems not to have been tested in practice.



Analysis diagram

A) 14...♘a5 15.♕xc7 (15.♕c2? c5) 15...♖ac8 16.♕e5 (16.♕g3 ♕e7 17.0-0 ♘b3 18.♖ad1 ♕xa3 19.♘e5⩲) 16...♕xe5 17.dxe5 (17.♘xe5 ♗xg2) 17...♖fe8 18.0-0 ♗xf3 19.♗xf3 ♖xe5 – Lipnitsky assesses the ending as better for Black, whilst I and Rybka vote for equality;

B) 14...♖ac8 15.♖c1 ♘a5 16.♕b4 c5 17.dxc5 ♖xc5 18.♖xc5 ♕a1+ 19.♗d1 ♗xf3 (19...♖d8 20.♘d2 ♗xg2 21.♕h4 ♘b7 22.♖c7±) 20.gxf3 ♖d8 21.0-0! (21.♔e2? bxc5 22.♕xa5 ♕b2+ 23.♔e1 ♖d6. 'An interesting position! Black is a piece down, but he can continue to develop his attack and does not risk losing. The threat of the advance of the pawn to c3 is highly unpleasant for White' – Lipnitsky) 21...bxc5 22.♕xc5 ♘b7 (22...♖xd1? 23.♕c8+ ♔h7 24.♕c2++–) 23.♕c7 ♖xd1 24.♕c8+ ♘d8 25.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 26.♖xa1. White has an extra pawn, but he may well not be able to realise it.

13...♘a5 14.♗e2

14.♗d5 c6 15.♗e4 ♗a6, and the white king has to stay in the centre.

14...c5 15.0-0 ♗e6

15...cxd4 16.♕xd4 ♕e7 17.♕b4 ♕f6 18.♖ad1 ♗b7 19.♖d6 ♕f5 (Cvitan-Kovacevic, Stari Mikanovci 2008) 20.♖fd1±.

16.dxc5 ♘b3 17.♖ad1 ♘xc5=



Analysis diagram

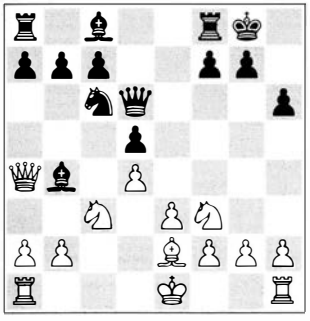
A popular opening *tabiya*. White wants to castle kingside and carry out a minority attack on the queenside. It is clear that Black's basic task consists in creating threats on the other side of the board. To do so, he needs to retreat the bishop to d6 and secure it from exchange with the move ...a7-a6, after which he will be able to transfer the knight to the kingside, via e7 to g6 or f5. Of course, the execution of this plan

requires a lot of time, but White does not yet have any particular targets to fasten onto on the queenside.

10...♗e6

A) **10...a5** is an interesting idea, which has hardly been tested in practice. Black makes it harder for his opponent to seize space with b2-b4, but at the same time, deprives himself of the chance to cover the b5-square by ...a7-a6. **11.0-0 ♘e7 12.a3 ♗d6 13.b4** 13.♘b5 ♗d7 14.♕c2 ♗xb5 15.♗xb5 c6, and Black has good play. **13...c6 14.b5 c5 15.♖fd1 ♗e6⇄** Ruban-Arencibia Rodriguez, Santa Clara 1991;

B) **10...♕d6**

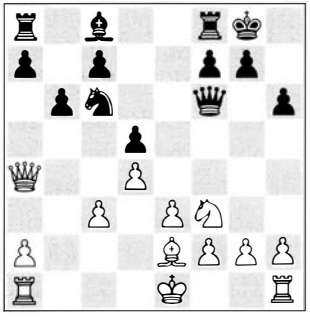


Analysis diagram

As played by Bronstein, perhaps by analogy with the game Makogonov-Keres. Even so, this set-up does not look optimal. While he has the chance, Black should preserve his dark-squared bishop. **11.0-0 ♗f5 12.♖fc1 a6 13.♕b3 ♘e7 14.♘a4 ♖ab8 15.♘c5!?** 15.♗d3 ♗xd3 16.♕xd3 ♕d7⇄ Piket-Bronstein, Rotterdam 1990. Here Piket blundered a piece with 17.♘e5? and then continued a hopeless resistance for a long time afterwards. **15...♗xc5 16.dxc5 ♕d7 17.♕c3 c6 18.b4 f6 19.♘d4±** Kutsin-Juricek, Slovakia 1998;

C) **10...♕g6** A move based on the principle that the best defence is attack. Black wants to draw his opponent's attention to the kingside at once, so that the latter will forget about the queenside minority attack. **11.0-0 ♗h3 12.♘e1 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♖fd8** After 13...♗f5 14.♕b5 White can win a pawn and Black still has to show that he has sufficient compensation: 14...♕d6 15.♕xb7 ♖fb8 16.♕a6 ♖b2 17.♗d3 ♗d7 18.♘c2 ♖ab8 19.♕a3± Jukic-Rotstein, Vienna 1991. **14.♗d3 ♗f5 15.♖d1 ♘e7 16.c4 b6 17.♗xf5 ♘xf5** draw, Genov-Hanley, San Sebastian 2006.

D) **10...♗xc3+!?** This exchange may be the simplest path to equality. If so, then instead of 10.♗e2 more accurate is 10.♖c1, as Mamedyarov himself played in a game with Kramnik. **11.bxc3 b6**



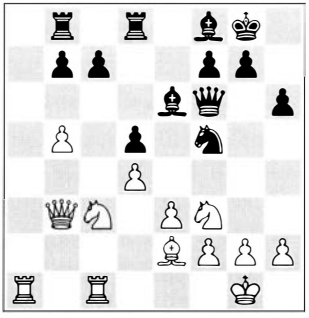
Analysis diagram

Black's plan is simple and clear: to put his knight on a5 and prepare ...c7-c5, with fully equal chances. White does not have many ways of preventing this intention.

12.0-0 12.c4 dxc4 13.♕xc4 ♗b7 14.0-0 leads to a transposition. **12...♗b7 13.c4** A couple of times, White has tried to prepare this move, by first putting a rook on c1, but this does not have much effect on Black's play:

13.♖ac1 ♖fc8 14.♖fd1 ♘a5 15.♘e5 c5 16.♕d7 ♖d8 17.♕h3 ♗c8 18.♕g3 ♗e6⇄ Garcia Palermo-Terzic, Zenica 1987; 13.♖fc1 (Rowson-Parker, England 2005/06) 13...♘a5!? 14.♘e5 ♕d6 followed by ...c7-c5 and good play for Black. **13...dxc4 14.♕xc4 ♖ac8 15.♖ac1 ♘a5 16.♕b4** 16.♕b5!?. **16...♖fd8 17.♖fd1** (Karolyi-G.Kuzmin, Tallinn 1985) **17...c5! 18.dxc5 ♖xd1+ 19.♗xd1 ♕e7∓**;

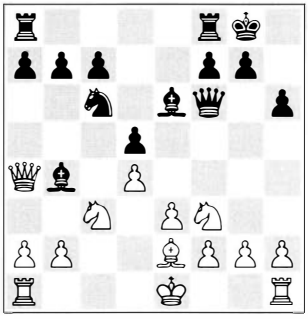
E) **10...♖d8** The logic is the same as after 10...♗e6: Black wants to retain both bishops and so defends the pawn on d5. Admittedly, now the bishop has to retreat not to d6, but further back, to f8, but in return, the light-squared bishop is not tied to the defence of d5 and can come out to f5 or g4. **11.0-0** After 11.♖c1 ♗f8 12.0-0 ♘e7 we reach a position from Mamedyarov-Kramnik, in which White put his king's rook on c1. **11...a6** In my opinion, the correct approach: do not retreat the bishop voluntarily, but wait until 'asked'. After 11...♗f8 12.a3 ♘e7 13.b4 a6 14.b5 White opens two lines on the queenside and can create pressure along them: 14...♗g4 15.bxa6 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♖xa6 17.♕b3 ♕d6 18.♖fc1± Bacrot-Yakovenko, Jermuk 2009. **12.♖fc1 ♖b8 13.a3 ♗f8 14.b4 ♘e7 15.♕b3 ♗e6 16.a4 ♘f5 17.b5 axb5 18.axb5**



Analysis diagram

18...c5! A typical idea in the Carlsbad system: Black eliminates all the pawns on the queenside. The price he has to pay for this, the creation of an isolated pawn on d5, is not very high, since Black has the two bishops and good control of the square d4. **19.bxc6 bxc6 20.♕a4 c5⇄** Mamedyarov-Carlsen, Dortmund 2007.

Back to the game.



11.0-0

In reply to **11.a3** Black usually moves the bishop away, but occasionally he exchanges on c3, and in both cases, he cannot complain about the result. Here are a few examples:

A) **11...♗xc3+** 12.bxc3 ♕g6 13.0-0 ♗h3 14.♘e1 ♖fd8 15.♗d3 ♗f5 16.♗xf5 ♕xf5 17.c4 dxc4 18.♕xc4 ♖ac8 19.♘d3 ♘a5 20.♕c3 b6⇄ Malakhov-Zhang Zhong, Moscow 2004;

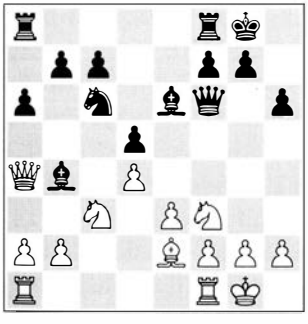
B) **11...♗d6 12.♘b5** White forces the exchange anyway, but this is not so unpleasant for Black. **12...♗g4 13.♖c1** 13.0-0 ♘e7 14.♘xd6 ♕xd6 15.♖fc1 c6 16.b4 a6 17.♕c2 ♘c8 18.♘g5 hxg5 19.♗xg4 g6 20.♕c5 ♕d8 21.a4 ♘d6⇄ Kir. Georgiev-Serper, Groningen 1993. **13...♘e7 14.♘xd6 ♕xd6 15.♕b4 ♕xb4+ 16.axb4 c6 17.b5**

♖fc8 18.♔d2 cxb5 19.♗xb5 f6 20.♖xc8+ draw, Bacrot-Ponomariov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

11...a6

'This move, preventing the knight coming to b5, is nearly always necessary, if Black wishes to ensure a safe station for the bishop on d6, from where it can take part in an attack on the white king' – Lipnitsky.

Practice in recent years (especially the game Bacrot-Ponomariov, given above) shows that the move ♘b5 is not too dangerous for Black, so the move ...a7-a6 can be dispensed with. Here is one more example: **11...♗d6 12.♘b5 ♗g4 13.♖fc1 a6 14.♘xd6 ♕xd6 15.♕c2 ♖fc8 16.♕c5 ♕xc5 17.♖xc5 ♘e7 18.b4 c6 19.♖ac1 ♔f8 20.♔f1 ♗xf3!** An important moment – the white knight can cause trouble if it comes to e5, c5 or a5, so it is best to exchange it. The enemy light-squared bishop will bite on the granite of Black's rock-solid pawn structure. **21.♗xf3 ♔e8 22.a4 b6 23.♖5c2 a5** – Black has sufficient counterplay to maintain the balance, Komljenovic- Rizouk, Sevilla 2010.



12.♖fc1

'In the Ragozin Defence, the abstract concept of a white opening advantage can take real forms: the black knight blocks the c-pawn, which sooner or later will become an object of attack, and the pawn on d5 for a long time is effectively isolated. In return, Black gets good piece play. There is no arguing with the fact that in the eyes of Schlechter, Teichmann or even Rubinstein, the backward pawn was something more concrete than lively piece play, but in our day, the latter is often preferred' – Bronstein.

It is clear that putting a rook on the c-file is right in principle, but which rook should it be? Having two rooks on the queenside greatly strengthens the attacking force, but the absence of a rook from f1 could be a decisive weakening of the white king's defences. Judging from the games in the database, most players seem to think the kingside threats are not so dangerous, but there are some players who are more cautious.

Incidentally, White is not obliged to put a rook on c1 at this moment at all, and he has other possibilities.

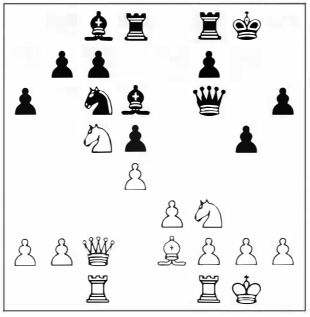
A) **12.a3** White drives the bishop where it wants to go, whilst the direct minority attack does not work here: 12...♗d6 13.b4 ♘e7 14.♕b3 c6 15.a4 ♗g4 16.♖ab1 ♘f5 17.♘e1 ♕h4 18.g3 ♕h3 19.♗xg4 ♕xg4 20.♕d1 ♕g6 21.♘g2 b5⇄ Vladimirov-Serper, Gausdal 1991;

B) **12.♕b3** ♗d6 13.♖ac1 (13.♕xb7? ♘a5 14.♘xd5 ♕d8∓) 13...♘e7 14.♘a4 b6 15.♕c2 g5 16.♘c3 ♕g6 17.♗d3 ♕h5 18.♘e2 g4 19.♘e5 ♗xe5 20.dxe5 c5⇄ Wojtaszek-Pashikian, Belfort 2005 (see also line F5 two pages onwards);

C) **12.♖fd1** ♗d6 (12...♖fd8 13.♘e5! ♗xc3 14.♘xc6 ♗d7 15.♕b3 ♗xc6 16.♕xc3 ♕d6 17.♖dc1 ♖dc8 18.♕c5

♗d7 19.b4 ♕xc5 20.bxc5± Khuzman-Zviagintsev, Moscow 1994 (rapid)) 13.♖ac1 ♘e7 14.b4 c6 15.♕b3 ♖ae8 16.♘a4 ♘g6 17.♘c5 ♖e7 18.♕b2 ♗g4 – Black has concentrated all his forces on the kingside and seized the initiative, Banikas-A.David, Kavala 2009;

D) **12.♕c2 ♖ad8 13.♘a4 ♗d6 14.♖ac1** 14.♘c5 ♗c8 15.♖fc1 g5⇄ Wirgren-Larsson, Sweden 1976. **14...g5 15.♘c5 ♗c8**

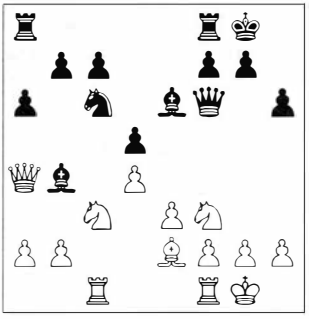


Analysis diagram

'Black develops a counter-initiative on the kingside. Black's set-up for both attack and defence is instructive. Note the typical manoeuvre ...♖a8-d8 and ...♗e6-c8, which is very common in such positions. First the rook moves from a8, and only then the bishop retreats. This not only allows Black to strengthen his queenside, but also preserves his light-squared bishop for the attack' – Lipnitsky. **16.♕b3** 16.♘xa6 g4 17.♘d2 ♗f5 18.♕c3 ♘xd4 19.exd4 bxa6⇄. **16...g4 17.♘d2 ♘xd4! 18.exd4 ♕f4 19.g3 ♕xd2 20.♖c2 ♕xd4 21.♖d1** (Flohr-Veltmander, USSR 1949) **21...♕xc5! 22.♖xc5 ♗xc5** – in this double-edged position, Black's chances are preferable;

E) **12.♘e1** ♗d6 13.♘d3 ♘e7 14.b4 ♘f5 15.♖fc1 c6 16.♕d1 ♖ae8 17.a4 ♗c8 18.♖a2 (Neverov-Moiseenko, Warsaw 2005) and here Black missed a great chance to punish his opponent for taking insufficient care of his own king: 18...♘xe3! 19.fxe3 ♖xe3 20.♘e5 ♖e8 21.♗f3 ♖8xe5! 22.dxe5 ♕xe5 with extremely dangerous threats;

F) **12.♖ac1**



Analysis diagram

A popular *tabiya*. White keeps the king's rook for the defence of his king, and tries to press on the queenside with the minimum of forces.

12...♖fc8 13.♘e1 ♗d6 14.♘d3 ♘e7 15.♘c5 ♗xc5 16.dxc5 ♖d8 17.♖cd1 c6 18.♕d4 ♕xd4 (Petrosian-Averbakh, Kiev 1954) 19.♖xd4±;

12...♖fd8 13.♘e5 ♗xc3 14.♘xc6 ♗d7 15.♖xc3 ♗xc6 16.♕a5 ♕d6 17.♖fc1 ♖d7 18.♕a3 ♕f6 (Polugaevsky-Ivkov, Petropolis 1973) 19.♖c5 ♖d6 20.♕c3±.

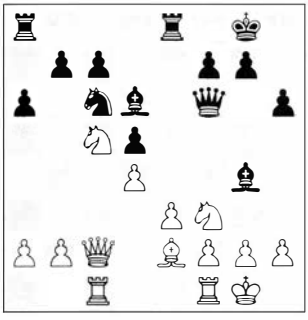
12...♗d6

Here or at least over the next couple of moves, White should free the a4 square for the knight transfer to c5. White wants to force the weakening move ...b7-b6, after which it will easier for him to create pressure along the c-file. In his turn, Black tries to create threats on the kingside, and with this aim, he transfers his knight via e7 to f5 or g6, puts one of his rooks on e8 and some-

times advances ...g7-g5. Concrete play begins, for which there are no universal recipes – one must sit there and calculate the variations:

F1) **13.♕d1** ♖ad8 14.♘e1 ♘e7 15.♘a4 ♘f5 16.g3 ♖fe8 17.♗f3 ♘h4!? (exploiting a concrete feature of the position: the knight cannot be taken because of ♕xh4 and mate on h2) 18.♗g4 ♗xg4 19.♕xg4 ♘f5 20.♘d3 c6 21.b4 ♖e4⇄ (C.Hansen-S.B.Hansen, Copenhagen/Malmö 2005) Black's further plans include ...g6 followed by ...h5-h4, breaking down White's defences;

F2) **13.♕c2** ♖fe8 14.♘a4 ♗g4 15.♘c5



Analysis diagram

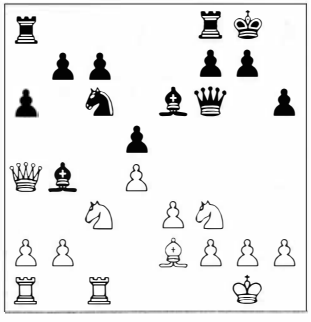
Here there followed a typical tactical idea, which is worth remembering: 15...♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♘xd4! 17.exd4 ♕f4 18.g3 ♕xf3 19.♘xb7 ♖e2 20.♕c6 ♖ae8 21.♘xd6 cxd6 22.♕xa6 ♖xb2⇄ C.Hansen-Andersson, Denmark 1986;

F3) **13.♘e1** ♘e7 14.♘d3 ♘f5 15.g3 c6 16.♕b3 ♖ab8 17.♘a4 ♖fe8⇄ Chiburdanidze-Matveeva, Moscow 1994;

F4) **13.♖fe1** ♘e7 14.a3 ♖fd8 15.♕d1 c6 16.♘a4 ♗g4 17.b4 ♘f5 18.♘c5 ♕e7 19.h3 ♗xf3 20.♗xf3, Cvitan-Dizdar, Pula 1993, 20...♘h4⇄;

F5) **13.♕b3 ♘e7 14.♘a4 b6** Usually Black avoids this move if possible, but here he will be able to quickly follow up with ...c7-c5 after the knight goes to a4, where it will have nothing more to do. **15.♕c2** 15.♖c3 g5 16.♖fc1 ♘g6 17.♕d1 ♕e7 18.♘e1 f5 19.♗h5 ♖f6 20.♘d3 f4 21.♗xg6 ♖xg6 22.♘e5 ♖g7 23.a3 ♖f8∓ Anastasian-Kacheishvili, Ubeda 2001; 15.♘c3 ♖fd8 16.♖fe1 ♘g6 17.♗f1 h5 18.♘b1 ♗g4 19.♘bd2 c5⇄ Turzo-P. Horvath, Aggtelek 2000. **15...g5 16.♘c3 ♕g6** In the ending, Black will be fine – he will immediately play ...c7-c5 and get rid of his only weakness. **17.♗d3 ♕h5 18.♘e2 g4 19.♘e5 ♗xe5 20.dxe5 c5 21.♕c3 ♘c6∓** is again Wojtaszek-Pashikian, Belfort 2005.

Back to the game.



12...♗d6

12...♖fd8 13.♕d1 ♗d6 – see 12...♗d6 13.♕d1 ♖fd8.

For history's sake, we present a move of Mikhail Tal: **12...♕f5** and draw, Garcia Palermo-Tal, Rio Hondo 1987.

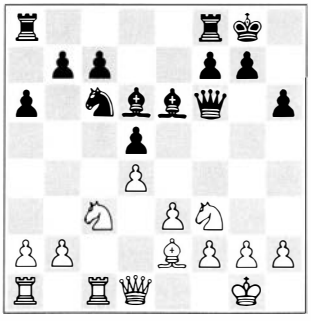
Illogical is **12...♕d8?!** – the queen is needed to create threats on the kingside. Possible then is: 13.♕d1 ♗d6 14.♘a4 ♘e7 15.♘c5 ♗xc5 16.♖xc5 ♗g4 17.b4 c6 18.a4 ♘f5 19.b5 axb5

20.axb5 ♖xa1 21.♕xa1 ♕b6 22.♕c1± Gavrikov-Ehlvest, Tallinn 2003.

13.♕d1

This retreat is perfectly justified – the queen frees a4 for the knight, and itself returns to assist the defence of the king.

The attempt to defend the king with minimum force could lead to trouble: 13.♘e1 ♘e7 14.♘d3 b6 15.b4 ♘f5 16.g3 ♕g5 17.♗f1 h5 18.♗g2 h4 19.♘f4 hxg3 20.hxg3 ♘xg3! (it is no surprise that such a blow should be available, as Black has a large superiority in forces in this area of the board) 21.fxg3 ♕xg3 22.♘cxd5 ♗xf4 23.♘e7+ ♔h8 24.exf4 ♗h3∓ Koniushkov-Maharramzade, Kstovo 1994.

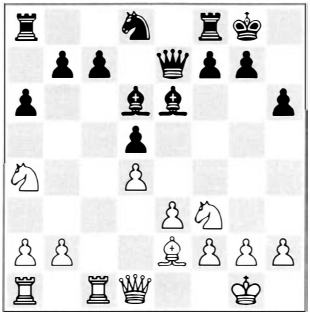


13...♘e7

A typical and ideal move – the positioning of the rooks on the eighth rank can wait, whereas the knight is needed on the kingside right away. Even so, Black occasionally tries other continuations:

A) **13...♖fd8 14.♘a4** 14.♖ab1!? ♘e7 15.b4 c6 16.♘a4 ♗f5 17.♖b2 ♖ac8 18.♘c5 ♖c7 19.a4 ♗c8 20.♘e1 ♘f5 21.♖bc2 ♖e8 22.b5 axb5 23.axb5 ♖ce7 24.♘f3± Jobava-Yuldashev, Al Ain 2008. **14...♘e7 15.♘c5 ♗c8** 15...♗xc5 16.♖xc5 c6 17.b4 ♗g4 18.♘e5 ♗xe2 19.♕xe2 ♘f5 20.♕f3 ♕e6 21.♕g4 ♖e8 draw, Dzindzichashvili-Ivkov, Geneva 1977. **16.♕f1** 16.b4 ♘g6 17.a4 b6 18.♘d3 ♕e7 19.♕b3 ♖b8 20.♕c3 f6 21.a5± Schuurman-Zhao Xue, Dresden 2008. **16...a5** 16...c6!? 17.b4 b6 18.♘d3 a5 19.bxa5 ♖xa5 20.a4 ♗f5∓ Lengyel-Ghitescu, Miskolc 1963. **17.a3 ♘g6 18.♖c3 c6 19.♖ac1 ♕e7 20.g3 ♘f8 21.b4 axb4 22.axb4 ♘d7 23.♘xd7 ♗xd7 24.b5 ♖a2⇄** Petrosian-Uusi, Moscow 1956;

B) A slightly unusual, but very effective method of fighting against the white knight's appearance on c5 was demonstrated by Viktor Lvovich Kortchnoi: **13...♕e7** 14.♘a4 ♘d8 Where and why are the black pieces retreating? It's a big secret!



Analysis diagram

15.♘c5 ♗f5 16.a3 c6 (here we see the idea. From e7, the queen defends the b7 pawn, whilst the knight will go to e6 to exchange off the invader) 17.g3 ♘e6 18.♘h4 ♗h7 19.♗d3 ♗xd3 20.♘xe6 ♕xe6 21.♕xd3 g6! Black has a small initiative, Peek-Kortchnoi, Gibraltar 2006;

C) **13...♖fe8** 14.♘a4 ♘d8 15.♘c5 ♗c8 16.♘d3 (anticipating the move ♘e6 and looking at the e5-square. Even so, it was better to retreat the queen to

e7, a la Kortchnoi, so as to be able to take control of the e5-square with the move ...f7-f6 at the necessary moment) 16...g6 17.b4 ♘c6 18.♕b3 g5 19.♗f1 g4 20.♘fe1 ♖d8 21.g3 ♘e7⇄ Ostojic-Giorgadze, Belgrade 1992. At the second attempt, the knight has reached e7, and its further path lies on the kingside;

D) **13...♖ad8 14.♘a4 ♗c8** In full accord with Lipnitsky's recommendation – first the rook comes to d8, and then the bishop returns to c8. **15.♘c5 ♘e7 16.♕b3 ♗xc5 17.♖xc5 c6 18.♘e5** 18.♕d1 ♘f5 19.a4 ♘d6. In the Carlsbad – which is the structure we have before us – this is the best square for the knight, from where it can come to c4 or e4, as well as holding up the important advance b4-b5. 20.♖cc1 ♗g4 21.b4 ♖fe8 22.h3 ♗h5 23.♖ab1 ♖e6⇄ Pantsulaia-Greenfeld, Kolkata 2007. **18...♘g6 19.♘d3 ♘h4 20.♗f1 ♖d6 21.♖c3 ♕g5 22.♔h1 ♘f3** Of course, the pawn on h6 gets in Black's way, since he would like to put his rook there. But even without a rook, he has been able to create unpleasant threats. **23.♕d1 ♖f6⇄** Malaniuk-Maliutin, Dortmund 1993;

E) **13...♖ae8** 14.♘a4 ♘d8 15.♘c5 ♗c8 16.b4 (16.♘d3 ♘e6 17.♘fe5 c5 18.♘g4 ♕e7 19.dxc5 ♘xc5 20.♘xc5 ♗xc5 21.♕xd5 ♗d6 22.♕h5 ♗e6⩱ Portisch-Sosonko, Wijk aan Zee 1975) 16...♘e6 17.a4 ♘g5 18.b5 a5 19.♘xg5 ♕xg5 20.♗f3 b6 21.♘d3 ♗f5 22.♘e5 ♗e6⇄ Yermolinsky-Milov, Groningen 1998.

14.♘a4

'He should not allow ...c7-c5, but wishes to provoke ...b7-b6' – Bronstein.

A) On **14.a3** Black can reply **14...c5**, practically equalising. For example: 15.dxc5 ♗xc5 16.♘a4 ♗a7 17.b4 d4 18.♘xd4 ♖ad8 19.♕f1 ♗xd4 20.exd4 ♘f5 21.♘c5 draw, Jobava-Efimenko, Rijeka 2010. Complicated play results from **14...b6** 15.♕f1 ♗g4 16.b4 c6 17.♘a4 ♖fb8 18.h3 ♗f5 19.♕e1 g5 20.♘b2 h5 21.♘d3 g4 22.hxg4 ♗xd3 23.♗xd3 hxg4 24.♘d2 a5⇄ N.Maiorov-Alexandrov, Minsk 2007;

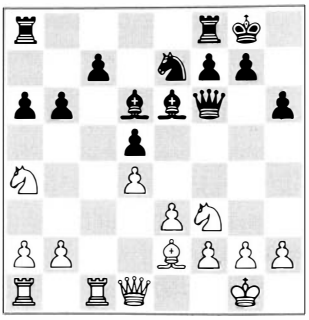
B) **14.♖ab1 ♗f5** 14...♖ad8 15.b4 c6 16.♘a4 ♗c8 17.♘c5 g5 18.a4 b5 19.♘d3 ♘g6 20.♘fe1 ♗b8 21.♖c3 ♘e7 22.♖bc1 ♕d6 23.g3 ♔g7 24.♘f3 f6 25.♘d2± Arencibia Rodriguez-Jobava, Havana 2005. **15.♗d3 c6 16.b4 ♖fe8 17.♘a4 ♘c8 18.♘c5 ♖e7 19.♕c2 ♗xd3 20.♘xd3 ♘b6 21.♘de5 ♕e6 22.a4 f6 23.♘d3 ♘c4⇄** Fodor-Neubauer, Szentgotthard 2010.

14...b6

'The attempt to prevent the arrival of a knight on c5 involves a weakening of the black queenside, and the necessity of defending the resulting weaknesses hinders the development of his counterplay on the kingside' – Lipnitsky.

An interesting observation, although we will soon see that Black has another plan, as well as the attack on the king: he can start counter-operations on the queenside.

Black's game also looks quite solid after 14...c6 15.♘c5 ♗xc5 16.♖xc5 ♗g4, e.g.: 17.♘e5 (17.b4 ♘f5 18.a4 ♘d6 19.♖ac1 ♗xf3 20.♗xf3 ♖fd8⇄ Rustemov-Vallejo Pons, Germany Bundesliga 2005/06) 17...♗xe2 18.♕xe2 ♕e6 19.♖c2 ♘c8 draw, Timman-Izoria, Calvia 2004.



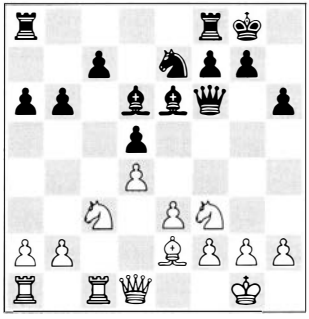
15.♘c3

'The knight has effectively fulfilled both tasks and now returns' – Bronstein.
White has tried several different set-ups here, but has never achieved a great deal:

A) **15.b4 g5** 15...♖fe8 16.♕b3 g5 17.♘b2 g4 18.♘e5 ♗xe5 19.dxe5 ♕xe5 20.♘d3 ♕g5 21.♘f4 c6 22.♕b2 ♗d7 23.a4⩲ Comas Fabrego-Piket, Escaldes 1998; 15...♘g6 16.♘b2 a5 17.b5 ♖ad8 18.♘d3 ♖fe8 19.♖c3 ♗f5 20.♖ac1 ♗e4 21.g3 ♕f5 22.♘d2 ♕e6 23.♗g4 ♗f5 24.♗xf5 ♕xf5 25.♕f3 ♕xf3 26.♘xf3± Zilberman-Soffer, Israel 2000. **16.♘b2 ♘g6 17.♘d3 h5 18.♘fe5 g4 19.f4 ♘h4 20.a4 ♕g7 21.a5 f6 22.♘c6 ♘f5 23.♕d2 ♖fe8⇄** Beliavsky-Lautier, Biel 1992;

B) **15.a3** g5 16.♘d2 ♕g7 17.♘f1 f5 18.♘c3 ♔h8 19.b4 f4 20.e4 dxe4 21.♘xe4 ♘f5 22.♘xd6 ♘xd6 23.d5 ♗g8 24.♖a2 ♖fe8 25.♖ac2∓ draw, L.B.Hansen-C.Hansen, Aalborg 1994;

C) **15.♕f1** Bronstein's recommendation; White seeks to weaken the enemy queenside even further, whilst with the knight on a4, it is bad to play ...b7-b5 because the knight can come into c5. **15...♗c8** 15...a5 16.♕d1 g5 17.♘e1 ♕g7 18.♘d3 g4 19.♕d2 h5 20.♗f1 h4⇄ Soffer-Slutzky, Tel Aviv 1993. **16.a3 g5 17.♘c3 ♗b7 18.♘e1 ♕e6 19.♘d3 f5 20.♘b4 a5 21.♘c2 f4 22.♖e1 f3!? 23.gxf3 ♘g6⩲** Zagorovsky-Kamenetsky, USSR 1966.



15...♖fc8

Black announces that he is ready to play ...c7-c5 when the chance arises. Other moves have also been tried:

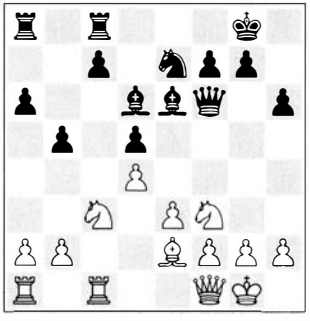
A) **15...♖fb8 16.a4 ♘c6?** The knight does not reach the weakened b4-square, therefore it was better to defend the centre with 16...c6!?. **17.e4! dxe4 18.♘xe4 ♕f4 19.d5 ♕xe4 20.dxe6 ♖d8** After 20...fxe6? 21.♖c4 ♕d5 22.♕xd5 exd5 23.♖xc6 Black loses a piece. **21.exf7+ ♔xf7 22.♕e1 ♔f8 23.♖c4 ♕e8 24.♖ac1 ♘e5 25.♖e4 ♘xf3+ 26.♗xf3±** Olafsson-Petrosian, Bled 1959;

B) In the following game, Black pursued the attack very sharply: **15...g5 16.g3 ♕g7 17.♕f1 f5** I believe White has enough pieces in the defence and can permit himself to take the pawn: **18.♗xa6 f4 19.exf4 ♖xa6?!** 19...gxf4 20.♗e2±. **20.♕xa6 gxf4 21.♕d3 ♗f5 22.♕d2 ♗e4** (Khairullin-Khismatullin, Ulan Ude 2009), and here White needed to find an accurate path to beat off the attack: **23.♘xe4 dxe4 24.♘h4 fxg3 25.hxg3 ♗f4 26.♕e2±**;

C) **15...♖fd8 16.♕f1** 16.a4!? c5 17.a5 ♖db8 18.♘a4 bxa5 19.♘xc5 ♖xb2 20.♖xa5 g5 21.♖ca1 g4 22.♘e5

h5 23.♘ed3± Benko-Lombardy, New York 1958. **16...c6 17.♘a4 ♖db8 18.♖c3 a5 19.♖ac1 ♗d7 20.a3 ♘g6 21.♗d3 ♕e6 22.♕d1 ♗c7 23.♕c2 ♘e7 24.♖e1** 'Having increased his pressure against c6 to a maximum, and found that the pawn is still being held, White switches to the e-file. 24.e4 immediately does not work, since the black knight comes to d5. White needs to arrange it so that the exchange of pawns on e4 results in immediate threats to the black queen' – Bronstein. **24...f5 25.b4 axb4 26.axb4 ♗d6 27.♖b1 b5 28.♘c5** with the initiative to White, Taimanov-Kotov, Zurich 1953.

16.♕f1 b5



This move is quite in place – Black retains the possibility of playing ...c7-c5, with good counterplay.

17.a4 c6

As well as this solid move, the following interesting pawn sacrifice deserves consideration: **17...b4** 18.♘b1 c5 19.♗xa6 ♖c7 20.dxc5 ♖xc5 21.♖xc5 ♗xc5 22.♘bd2 ♕xb2 23.♖b1 ♕a2 24.♖a1 ♕b2= Gustafsson-Sargissian, Germany Bundesliga 2005/06.

18.♘b1

White wishes to transfer the knight to c5, but this manoeuvre takes a lot of time.

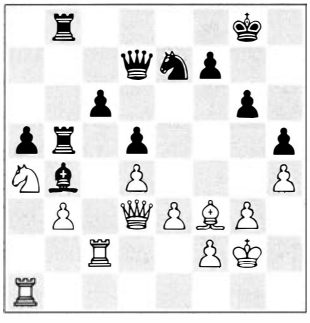
18...bxa4 19.♘c3 ♗g4 20.♘xa4 ♗xf3 21.♗xf3 ♖cb8

Black has a backward pawn on c6, but it is hard to attack, as it is solidly defended by the knight. In his turn, Black has pressure against the b2 pawn. In addition, the opposite-coloured bishops increase his chances of a draw.

22.♕e2 a5 23.♕d2

Black also has sufficient counterplay after 23.♘c5 ♖b5 24.♘d3 a4.

23...♗b4 24.♕d3 g6 25.b3 ♕d6 26.♖c2 ♖b5 27.h4 h5 28.g3 ♖ab8 29.♔g2 ♕d7



Black has placed almost all of his pawns on light squares, limiting the enemy bishop to a maximum. It is hard for White to strengthen his position, as it is not realistic to get at the c6 pawn.

30.♘c3 ♖5b7 31.♘e2 ♗d6 32.♘c1 ♕d8 33.♕c3 ♗b4 34.♕d3 ♗d6 35.♕c3 ♗b4 36.♕d3

Draw.

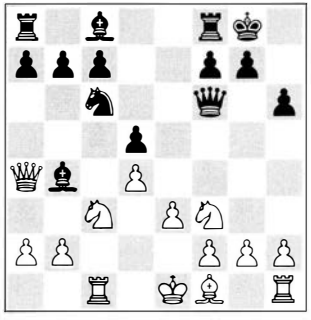
Game 11
Mamedyarov,Shakhriyar
Kramnik,Vladimir
Baku 2010 (rapid)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.e3 0-0

By transposition, we have reached the same position as in Mamedyarov-Elianov.

10.♖c1

As I have already pointed out, after **10.♗e2** Black has the good alternative **10...♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 b6**. The text move prevents this possibility.



10...♖d8

This position has a good pedigree, having been seen in many games between strong players:

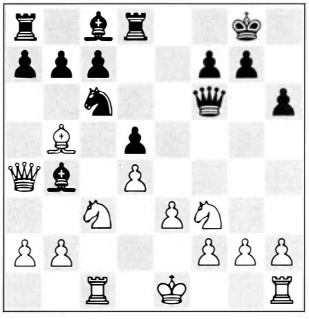
A) **10...a6** 11.a3 ♗xc3+ 12.♖xc3 ♕g6 13.♕c2 ♗f5 14.♕b3 ♗e6 15.♗e2 ♕b1+ 16.♗d1 ♘a5 17.♕c2 ♕xc2 18.♗xc2 ♘c4⇄ Shirov-Kupreichik, Val Maubuee 1989;

B) **10...♗g4** 11.♗e2 ♕d6 12.0-0 ♗xc3 13.♖xc3 ♘e7 14.♖fc1 c6 15.♕d1 a5 16.♘e5 ♗xe2 17.♕xe2 ♘f5 18.♕g4 g6⇄ Pantsulaia-Ehlvest, San Marino 2006;

C) **10...♕g6 11.♕d1** 11.♕c2?! ♗f5 12.♕d1 ♗e4 13.♘d2 ♖ae8 14.♘dxe4 ♕xe4 15.♗e2 ♕xg2 16.♗f3 ♕g5∓ Yrjölä-Alexandrov, Pula 1997; 11.♕b3 ♖d8 12.a3 ♗d6 13.♘b5 ♘e7 14.♘xd6 ♕xd6 15.♗d3 c6 16.0-0 ♖b8 17.♖c3 ♗f5 18.♗e2 ♗g4⇄ Gofshtein-Dizdar, Zagreb 1993. **11...♗e6** 11...♖d8 12.a3 ♗f8 13.h3 ♘e7 14.♗d3 ♕f6 15.0-0 ♘f5 16.♗b1 ♘h4 draw, Feller-Fressinet, Nimes 2009. **12.a3 ♗d6 13.g3 ♘e7 14.♘b5 ♗g4 15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♕xf3 c6 17.♘xd6 ♕xd6 18.♗d3 ♖fe8=** Kholmov-Spassky, Leningrad 1956.

11.♗e2

In my view, **11.♗b5** is very promising, trying to spoil the opponent's queenside pawn structure. For example:



Analysis diagram

11...a5 11...♗f8 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.0-0 c5 14.dxc5 ♗xc5 15.♘b5 ♕b6 16.♘xc7! ♖b8 17.♘xd5 ♖xd5 18.♕e8+ ♗f8 19.♖xc8 ♖xc8 20.♕xc8 ♕xb2 21.♕a6± Shamkovich-Ghitescu, Timisoara 1972. **12.a3 ♗f8 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.0-0 ♗d6 15.e4 ♗f4 16.♖ce1 ♗g4 17.♘e5 ♗xe5 18.dxe5 ♕g6 19.f3 ♗h3 20.♖f2 dxe4 21.♘xe4±** Shariyazdanov-Ibragimov, Moscow 1998.

The following game is interesting, mainly for the non-standard white bishop manoeuvre: **11.a3** ♗f8 12.♗d3

♗e6 13.♗b1 a6 14.0-0 ♗d6 15.♖fe1 g6 16.♗a2 ♗f8 17.e4! ♘e7 18.exd5 ♘xd5 19.♘xd5 ♗xd5 20.♗xd5 ♖xd5 21.♖xc7± Banikas-Ehlvest, Panormo 2002.

11...♗f8 12.0-0 ♘e7

12...a6 13.♕d1 (13.♕b3 ♘e7 14.♘a4 c6 15.♘b6 ♖b8 16.♘xc8 ♖dxc8 17.♘e5 ♖d8 18.♗g4 draw, Galopoulos-Pavlovic, Kalamaria 2009) 13...♘e7 14.♘a4 c6 15.♘b6 ♖b8 16.♘xc8 ♘xc8 17.♘e5 ♗d6 18.f4± Flohr-Estrin, Moscow 1953.

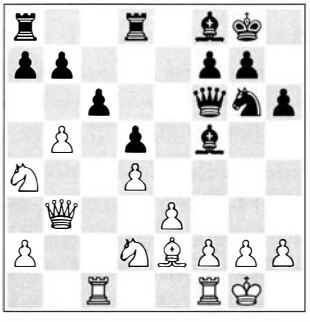
13.b4

13.♘e5 ♕b6 14.♗h5 g6 15.♗f3 c6 16.♕c2 ♘f5 17.a3 a5 18.g3 ♗g7 19.♗g2 ♖e8 20.♖fd1 ♕d8 21.♘d3 h5⇄ Rajkovic-Brkljaca, Belgrade 2007.

13...♘g6

In the following game, Black abandoned his queenside to its fate, hoping for success on the other flank, but it all ended in a fiasco: 13...a6 14.♕b3 ♗g4 15.♘a4 b5?! 16.♘c5 ♘f5 17.♘b7! ♘h4?! 18.♘xd8 ♗xf3 19.♗xf3 ♘xf3+ 20.gxf3 ♖xd8 21.f4± Temirbaev-Landa, Krasnoyarsk 1998.

14.b5 ♗g4 15.♕b3 c6 16.♘d2 ♗f5 17.♘a4



This was a rapid game, and it looks as though Kramnik simply did not have time to find the best set-up for his pieces.

Black has played several rather drifting moves, randomly bringing pieces towards the enemy king, hoping to land a blow in time-trouble.

17...♘h4

Objectively, it seems that it was stronger to play 17...♗d6 18.♘c5 ♖ab8 19.♖c3 ♘e7, in order to neutralise the opponent's initiative on the queenside. Then there could follow: 20.♖fc1 b6!? (20...cxb5 21.♗xb5±) 21.♘a6 ♖bc8 22.bxc6 ♖xc6 23.♖xc6 ♘xc6 24.♖xc6 ♗xh2+ 25.♔xh2 ♕xc6⇄.

18.♖c3 ♖d6 19.g3 cxb5 20.♕xb5 b6

Black has given his opponent the only open file, whilst it is quite unclear how to develop the attack on the kingside.

21.♖fc1

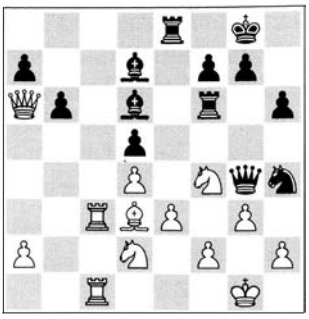
White quietly strengthens his position, not paying any attention to the knight on h4.

In the event of 21.gxh4?! ♗h3 22.f4 ♕xh4 Black would have excellent counterplay.

21...♗d7 22.♕a6 ♕f5 23.♘b2!

The knight has done excellent work in provoking a weakness, and now returns to defend the f2-square.

23...♖f6 24.♘d3 ♖e8 25.♘f4 ♗d6 26.♗d3 ♕g4 27.♗e2 ♕f5 28.♗d3 ♕g4



29.h3

White has the advantage, so it is understandable that he avoids the repetition. However, despite the computer's reassurances, it is very hard for a human player to take the pawn on d5: 29.♘xd5 ♖f3!, and White could easily overlook some sort of tactical blow.

29...♕g5 30.♕b7! ♖d8

Not 30...♗e6 31.♕c6 ♖d8 32.♕xd6!, and Black is mated on the back rank. The tempting blow 30...♖xe3 is also refuted: 31.♕xd7 ♖xd3 32.♖xd3 ♗xf4 33.♖c8+ ♔h7 34.♘f3 – White beats off all the threats, retaining his extra material.

31.♕xd5

White wins an important central pawn, and, most importantly of all, includes his queen in the defence. Black's position becomes hopeless.

31...♗f5 32.♘e4 ♘f3+ 33.♔g2

More precise is 33.♔h1!, but this no longer matters.

33...♘h4+ 34.♔h1 ♗xe4+ 35.♕xe4 ♘g6 36.♖c8 ♖f8 37.♖xf8+ ♗xf8 38.♖c8 ♕a5 39.♕e8 ♕e1+ 40.♔g2 ♘xf4+ 41.gxf4 ♕b4 42.f5 b5 43.♗c2 a5 44.e4 a4 45.e5 ♖b6 46.e6 ♖b7 47.♗e4 ♖a7 48.exf7+

Black resigned.

Game 12
Rabinovich,Ilya
Ragozin,Viacheslav
Moscow 1935

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♗g5 dxc4



At one time, it was believed that this move practically refutes the entire plan with 6.♗g5. Certainly, it is not easy for White to regain the pawn, but thanks to the definite freedom he gains in the centre, he has good compensation for it.

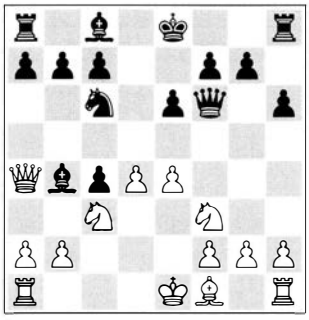
7.e3

A) Not dangerous for Black is **7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.a3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 0-0 10.e3** 10.♕xc4 e5 11.e3 exd4 12.cxd4 ♗e6 13.♕c5 ♖ad8 14.♗e2 ♗d5 15.0-0 b6 16.♕c3 ♖fe8 17.♖ac1 ♖e7 18.♖fd1⩲ Golod-M. Richter, Dresden 2007. **10...♗d7 11.♕xc4 ♖ac8 12.♕c5 b6 13.♕h5 g6 14.♕h6 ♘e7 15.♘e5 ♗a4 16.♗a6 ♖b8 17.h4 ♕g7 18.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 19.♗d3 c5⇄** Polaczek-Palac, Dresden 2008.

B) After **7.e4** we reach the territory of the Vienna Variation. As already stated in the Introduction, analysis of this variation lies outside the scope of the present book, but we must all the same take a short look here at one of its variations.

After 7.e4 Black has a choice between the quiet 7...h6 and the sharper 7...♗d7.

B1) **7...h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6**



Analysis diagram

White can regain the pawn at any moment, but Black obtains at least equal chances:

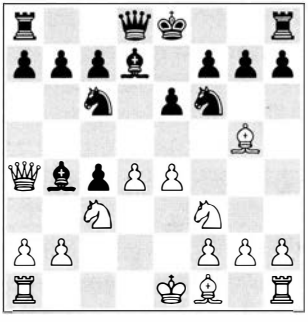
B11) **9.e5** ♕g6 10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 0-0 12.♕xc4 ♘a5 13.♕d3, draw, Delchev-Zelcic, Zadar 2009;

B12) **9.♘e5?! ♗d7 10.♘xc6** Worse is 10.♘xd7 because of the well-known trick 10...♕xd4!. Black wins another pawn and the knight on d7 cannot get out: 11.♕c2 ♕xd7 12.♖d1 ♘d4 13.♕d2 0-0-0 14.♗xc4 ♕c6∓ Guerra-Andrade Ocana, Lisbon 1999. **10...♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♗xc6 12.♕c2 ♕f4 13.f3 b5 14.a4 a6 15.♗e2 0-0 16.♕d2 ♕d6 17.e5 ♕d7∓** Arkell-Sher, Isle of Man 1994;

B13) **9.a3 ♗a5** Also good is 9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♕g6 11.e5 ♗d7 12.♕xc4 ♘e7 13.♕d3 ♘f5⇄. **10.♕xc4 ♗b6 11.♖d1 0-0 12.♗e2** Lipnitsky considers that White stands better, but the pressure against d4 allows Black to equalise: 12...♖d8 13.e5 ♕f4 14.g3 ♕f5 15.0-0 ♘a5 16.♕a2 ♘c6 17.♕c4 ♘a5=;

B14) **9.♗xc4 ♗d7** Creating the threat of 10...♘xd4; worse is 9...0-0 10.0-0 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 e5 12.♗d5 ♗d7 13.♖ab1 exd4 14.cxd4 ♖ab8 15.♖fe1 ♖fc8 16.♗xc6 ♕xc6 17.♕xa7 b6 18.♕a3 ♖a8 19.♕b2 ♕a4 20.♖e2± Ftacnik-Mirzoev, Lisbon 2001. **10.♕b3** 10.♕d1 g5!?⇄. **10...♗a5!** Black transfers the bishop to b6, so as to increase the pressure against d4. Weaker is 10...0-0 11.0-0 ♗a5 12.e5 ♕f5 13.♘e2 ♕h7 14.♗d3 ♕h8 15.♗e4± Chow-Karklins, Chicago 1994. **11.♖d1 ♗b6 12.0-0 ♘a5 13.♕b4 ♘c6 14.♕b3 ♘a5=**;

B2) **7...♗d7**

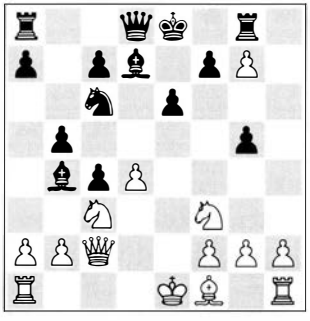


Analysis diagram

B21) After **8.♕d1** the queen is very passively placed, and Black can simply defend the pawn: **8...b5** Here too, Black has a quieter alternative in 8...h6, forcing the exchange of the dark-squared bishop. Possible then is: 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.e5 (10.♗xc4 e5 11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♗g4 13.d5 ♗xf3 14.♕xf3 ♕xf3 15.gxf3 ♘a5 16.♗b5+ ♔e7∓ Toth-Hryhorenko, Budapest 2005) 10...♕e7 11.♗xc4

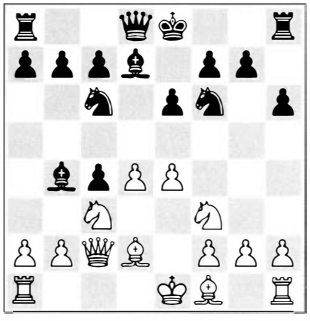
♘a5 12.♗d3 c5 13.0-0 cxd4 14.♘e4 ♕d8 15.a3 ♗e7 16.b4 ♘c6 17.♖e1 a6⇄ Naumkin-F. Levin, Riga 1988. **9.a4** After 9.e5 Black has the standard reaction 9...h6 10.♗h4 g5, and White does not even manage to equalise: 11.♘xg5 (11.exf6 gxh4 12.a4 a6 13.axb5 axb5 14.♖xa8 ♕xa8 15.♘xh4 ♘xd4! 16.♕xd4 ♕a1+ 17.♕d1 ♕xb2−+) 11...hxg5 12.♗xg5 ♘d5 13.♗xd8 ♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 15.♔e2 ♖xd8∓. **9...a6 10.♗e2** 10.e5 h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.exf6 gxh4 13.♗e2 ♖b8 14.0-0 ♕xf6 15.axb5 axb5 16.♖e1 0-0∓ Ikonnikov-S.Ivanov, Berlin 1992. **10...♘e7 11.♕c2 ♗c6 12.d5 exd5 13.0-0-0 ♗xc3 14.♕xc3 b4 15.♕d4 ♘xe4 16.♕xg7 ♖g8 17.♕xg8+ ♘xg8 18.♗xd8 ♖xd8∓** Pelletier-Wells, Germany Bundesliga 1999/00;

B22) **8.♕c2 h6** As the following game shows, with the white queen on c2, Black cannot ignore the threat of e4-e5: 8...b5? 9.e5 h6 10.exf6 hxg5 11.fxg7 ♖g8



Analysis diagram

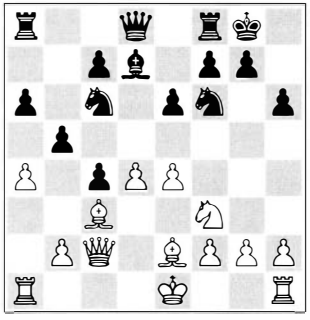
12.♕h7! This is the point. 12...♘e7 13.♘e5 c5 14.♗e2 ♕c7 15.♘xf7! cxd4 16.♗h5 ♗c6, Akobian-Ghaem Maghami, Beijing 2008, and here White could have obtained a decisive advantage after 17.♖d1! d3 18.0-0+−. **9.♗d2** 'Now Black must play very energetically, since with a quiet continuation such as 9...0-0 White regains the c4-pawn and obtains an advantage, thanks to his clear superiority in the centre' – Lipnitsky. We would add that after 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 White does not succeed in regaining the pawn: 10.e5 (10.♖d1 b5 11.♗e2 a6 12.0-0, Grau-Da Silva Rocha, Buenos Aires 1935, 12...0-0 13.b3 cxb3 14.axb3 ♗a5∓) 10...♕f4 11.♖d1 b5 12.♗e2 ♘e7 13.0-0 ♗c6 14.b3 ♕f5 15.♕xf5 ♘xf5 16.d5 exd5 17.♘xd5 ♗xd5 18.♖xd5 c6 19.♖dd1 (Gausel-Petursson, Gausdal 1995) 19...c3 20.♖d3 ♖d8∓.



Analysis diagram

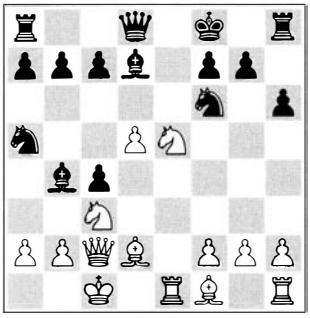
B221) **9...♗xc3** ' Black eliminates the knight, so as to defend the c4 pawn with ...b7-b5. However, this allows the white pieces to become more active' – Lipnitsky. **10.♗xc3** 10.bxc3 b5 11.h4 a6 12.g3 ♗c8 13.♗g2 ♗b7 14.♖d1 ♘e7 15.♘e5 c5⇄ Löffler-Jonkman, Wijk aan Zee 1995. **10...b5 11.a4!** 11.♗e2 a5 12.0-0 ♘b4 13.♕b1 ♗c6 14.♘d2 ♘d3 15.♗xd3 cxd3 16.d5 (16.♕xd3 b4∓) 16...exd5 17.♗xf6 ♕xf6 18.exd5 ♗xd5 19.♕xd3 c6 20.♖fe1+ ♔f8 21.a4 b4∓ Löffler-Rogozenko, Hamburg 2004. **11...a6** 11...b4!? 12.♗d2

b3 13.♕b1 (13.♕xc4 ♘xe4∓) 13...♗c8 14.e5 ♘d5 15.♗xc4 ♘cb4⇄. **12.♗e2** 'Only after forcing the move ...a7-a6 does White bring more pieces into the battle. Now Black does not have the reply ...♕d8-e7, because White simply captures on b5. This is the point of the move 11.a4!' – Lipnitsky. **12...0-0**



'A very sharp position has arisen. White has attacking possibilities on the kingside, connected with g2-g4 and ♖g1. A complicated game also arises after 0-0-0. If he prefers a quieter game, there is 0-0, but in this case too, White has the initiative. He has achieved this because in order to defend the extra pawn, Black has failed to develop counterplay and conceded the centre' – Lipnitsky;

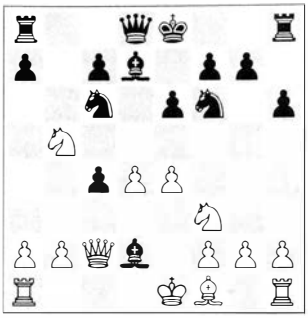
B222) **9...♘a5** Black hangs on to the pawn, in so doing completely conceding his opponent the initiative in the centre. **10.0-0-0** 10.e5 ♘h7 11.♘e4 ♗xd2+ 12.♘exd2 ♗c6 (12...b5 13.b3 ♘g5 14.bxc4 ♘xf3+ 15.♘xf3 bxc4 16.♗xc4 ♘xc4 17.♕xc4 ♖b8⇄) 13.b4 ♗xf3 14.♘xf3 ♘c6 15.♕xc4 ♘g5 16.♗e2 ♕d5∓; 10.♗e2 c5 11.dxc5 ♗c6 12.0-0 (Löffler-Hölzl, Austria 2001/02) 12...0-0 13.♖ad1 ♘d7⇄. **10...♗c6** 10...♕e7?! 11.♘e5! b5 (11...0-0 12.g4?) 12.♘xd7 ♕xd7 13.e5 ♘g8 14.d5? Pirc-Foltys, Moravska Ostrava 1933. **11.d5! exd5 12.exd5! ♗d7 13.♖e1+ ♔f8** 13...♗e7? 14.♘e4! ♘xe4 15.♕xe4 b6 16.♗b4+–. **14.♘e5**



Analysis diagram

'White has regained the pawn, since 14...b5 fails to 15.♘xb5!. The bad position of the king on f8 and the scattered positions of the other black pieces make his position very difficult. Thus, the continuation 7.e4!? has brought White a clear advantage in both of the lines examined. But this occurred because Black, in hanging onto the pawn, conceded a decisive position in the main theatre of the battle, namely the centre. As the reader can already see, conceding the centre usually only brings woes. And although this truth is known to all, even very strong players often forget about it' – Lipnitsky;

B223) **9...b5!** To this day, this continuation is considered strongest. 'Black does not hang onto his extra pawn, but strives for active piece play' – Lipnitsky. **10.♘xb5** 10.♗e2 a6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖ad1 ♖e8 13.♗f4 ♗c8 14.a4 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♗b7 16.♖fe1 ♘e7 17.♗f1 ♘g6 18.♗c1 ♕c8 19.♗a3 ♘d7 20.h4 c5∓ Krasenkow-Wells, Ohrid 2001. **10...♗xd2+**

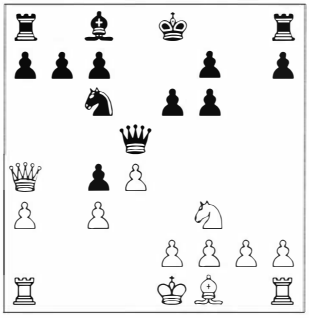


Analysis diagram

'Now White cannot maintain his powerful centralised pawn duo. Even 'heroic' efforts with his king, in the shape of 11.♔xd2!?, do not help, since there could follow 11...♘a5 followed by ...c7-c5. The only thing White can do is decide which pawn to give up, the e4 pawn or the d4 pawn' – Lipnitsky.

11.♘xd2 If 11.♔xd2, then instead of 11...♘a5, even stronger is 11...♖b8 12.♗xc4 ♘b4 13.♕a4 ♘xe4+ 14.♔e1 ♘d5∓; 11.♕xd2 ♘xe4 12.♕f4 ♘d6 13.♘xd6+ cxd6 14.♕xd6 (14.♗xc4 ♕a5+ 15.♕d2=) 14...♕a5+ 15.♘d2 c3 16.bxc3 ♕xc3 17.♖d1 (Vidmar-Bogoljubow, Bad Nauheim 1936) 17...♘xd4 18.♗c4 ♗a4 19.0-0 ♗xd1 20.♖xd1 ♖d8 21.♕c5 a6−+. **11...a6 12.♘a3** 12.♘c3 ♘xd4 13.♕d1 0-0 14.♗xc4 ♗b5 15.0-0 ♕d6 16.♖e1 ♕e5 17.a4 ♗c6 18.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 19.♕xf3 ♖fd8⇄ Tunik-Ionov, Orel 1992. **12...♘xd4 13.♕xc4** 'For the endgame, White has the better pawn structure, but before that lies the whole of the middlegame, in which Black has active pieces and the superior central position. His knight on d4 occupies an especially good position. Even after the exchange of queens, the great activity of Black's pieces compensates for his pawn weaknesses. In general, chances are equal' – Lipnitsky. **13...♗b5** 13...e5!? 14.♕c5 ♗e6!? 15.♕xe5 0-0 16.♘f3 c5 17.♕xc5 (17.♘xd4 cxd4 18.♗d3 ♖b8∓) 17...♘xe4 18.♕xd4 ♕a5+ 19.♘d2 ♖ad8 with chances for both sides. **14.♘xb5 axb5 15.♕c5 ♕d6 16.♕xd6 cxd6 17.♗d3** (Malaniuk-Beliavsky, Odessa 1989) **17...♔e7∓**;

C) **7.a3** A slow move. Black has an extra pawn, and he is not in a hurry to give it back. **7...♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♕d5! 9.♗xf6** 9.♗f4 ♗d7 10.♕c2 ♕e4 11.♕c1 ♘a5 12.♗xc7 ♘b3 13.♘d2 ♕c6 14.♘xb3 cxb3 15.♗f4 a5∓ Ftacnik-Lerner, Stary Smokovec 1977. **9...gxf6**



Analysis diagram

Now White has tried various moves, but Black has adequate counterplay in all lines:

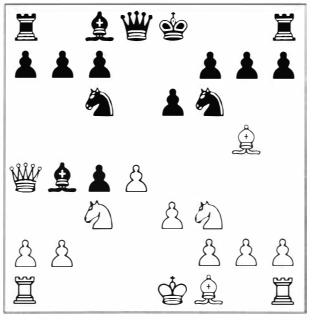
C1) **10.♘d2 b5** 10...b6?! 11.e4 ♕d7 12.♘xc4 ♗b7 13.♘e3 ♘e7 14.♗b5 ♗c6 15.♗xc6 ♕xc6 16.♕xc6+ ♘xc6 17.f4± Deviatkin-Landa, Serpukhov 2008. **11.♕d1** 11.♕c2 ♗b7 12.♖b1 ♘d8 13.a4 a6 14.e4 ♕d7 15.♗e2 c5? Pilaj-Palac, Graz 2009. **11...♖b8 12.e4 ♕d6 13.♕g4 e5 14.♕g7 ♖f8 15.d5 ♘a5 16.♗e2 ♘b3 17.♘xb3 cxb3⇄** M. Gurevich-Ribli, Reggio Emilia 1991;

C2) **10.g3 ♗d7 11.♕c2 ♘a5 12.e4 ♕c6 13.♗g2** 13.♘d2 0-0-0 14.♖b1 ♕a4 15.♕b2 c5 16.♗g2 ♗c6 17.0-0 ♘b3 18.♘xb3 cxb3⇄ Röder-Cs. Horvath, Velden 1995. **13...♕a4**

14.♕e2 ♘b3 15.♖b1 ♕xa3 16.0-0 ♘a5 17.e5 f5 18.♘g5 h6 19.♖a1 ♕xc3 20.♕h5 0-0-0 21.♘xf7 ♗e8⇄ Zhao Xue-Zaiats, Moscow 2004;

C3) **10.♕c2 f5** 10...♘a5 11.e4 ♕c6 12.♗e2 b6 13.d5 ♕c5 14.0-0 ♗d7 15.dxe6 fxe6 16.e5 f5 17.♘g5 ♖g8 18.♗h5+ ♔e7 19.♕d2⩲ Markus-Vallejo Pons, Dresden 2007. **11.g3 b6 12.♗g2 ♗b7 13.0-0** 13.♘h4 ♕a5. **13...0-0-0 14.♘h4 ♕d7 15.e4 fxe4 16.♗xe4 ♘a5 17.♗xb7+ ♔xb7 18.♖fe1 ♕c6∓** Kramnik-Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 1999 (blitz).

We will now end our rather long opening excursion and return to the game Rabinovich-Ragozin.



7...♕d5

'With this move, Black fulfils three tasks: he unpins the knight on f6, defends the pawn on c4 and prepares the move ...b7-b5' – Lipnitsky.

Grünfeld's recommendation also deserves attention: **7...♗d7 8.♕c2** 8.0-0-0 a6 9.d5 b5 10.♕c2 ♘e7 11.dxe6 fxe6∓; 8.♗xc4? ♘xd4 9.♕d1 ♘xf3+ 10.♕xf3 ♗c6∓. **8...b5 9.♗e2** 9.a4 a6 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♘d2 0-0 12.g4 ♗e7 13.♕e4 ♘b4 14.♖g1 ♗c6 15.♕b1 ♔h8∓ Czebe-Wells, Balatonbereny 1992. **9...a6 10.♘e5 ♗e7 11.♘xd7 ♕xd7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗f3 ♖ab8 14.♖fd1 h6 15.♗h4 ♘b4 16.♕e2 ♘bd5∓** Perelshteyn-Ippolito, Peabody 2007.

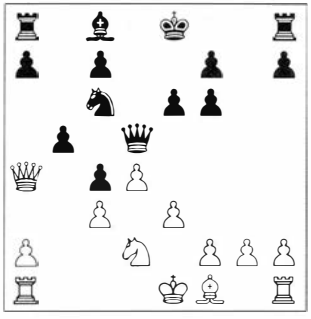
8.♗xf6

'White prevents the enemy knight coming to e4, and also frees his knight at f3 for the coming manoeuvre' – Lipnitsky.

8...gxf6 9.♘d2

9.♕xb4? ♘xb4 10.♘xd5 exd5 11.♔d2 ♗f5 12.♘e1 a5 13.f3 0-0-0∓ D.Bischoff-Rabiega, Altenkirchen 2001.

9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 b5



11.♕c2

White creates the threats of a2-a4 and ♗f1-e2-f3.

As an alternative, Lipnitsky suggests **11.♕a3**. His idea is not just to prevent Black castling kingside. White wants to drive the enemy queen from the centre, and then bring his own queen to c5, exerting pressure on the entire enemy queenside. But Black has sufficient defensive resources, e.g. **11...f5** Less convincing is 11...♕d6 12.♕b2 ♖b8 13.a4 a6 14.axb5 axb5 15.♘e4 ♕e7 16.♗e2⩲. **12.♖d1 ♗b7 13.f3 ♘e7 14.♕a5 ♗c6 15.♕xc7 ♕d8 16.♕e5 ♖g8 17.e4** (Alonso Pascual-Reig Albero, Aragon 1997) **17...♕a5∓**

11...♗b7

Dubious is 11...♘e7 because of 12.a4 a6 13.♗e2, but possible are both 11...♘a5 12.♗e2 ♗b7 13.♗f3 ♕g5 14.e4 0-0⇄, and 11...a6 12.♗e2 ♗b7 13.♘e4 (13.♗f3 ♕d8 14.♘xc4 bxc4 15.♖b1 ♘xd4 16.cxd4 ♗xf3 17.gxf3 c5 18.dxc5 ♕a5+ 19.♔e2 ♕xc5⇄) 13...♕f5!.

12.♖b1

12.♗e2? ♕xg2 13.♖f1 (13.♗f3 ♘xd4!) 13...a6∓.

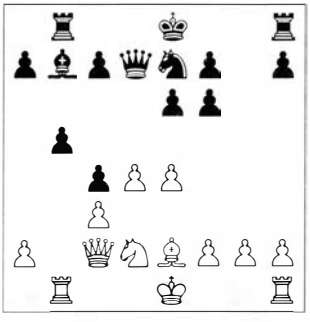
12...♖b8

White was threatening to take on c4, so Black defends the bishop on b7. Also possible was 12...♘a5 13.e4 ♕d7 14.a4 a6∓.

13.e4 ♕d7

The queen leaves its dangerous position and at the same time indirectly (thanks to the idea ♘xd4) defends the b5-pawn.

14.♗e2 ♘e7



15.0-0

White should at some moment, (such as now) force Black to place a pawn on c6, completely shutting in his bishop: 15.a4 a6 16.axb5 axb5 17.♕b2 c6. Here White has full compensation for the pawn, thanks to his superiority in the centre.

15...0-0 16.♖b2 a6 17.♕b1 c5 18.dxc5 ♖fc8 19.♖d1 ♕c7 20.a4 ♗c6

Black has already achieved ...c7-c5, destroying the enemy centre, and has obtained an excellent game. His bishop is a full-fledged participant in the battle, attacking an enemy pawn and defending its own.

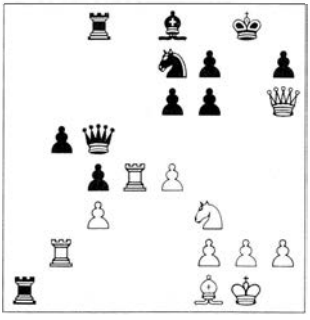
21.axb5 axb5 22.♘f3 ♗e8 23.♖d4

A small trap – c5 cannot be captured because of the counter-blow on c4.

23...♖a8!

The rook moves out of the x-ray and occupies the open file.

24.♕c1 ♕xc5 25.♕h6 ♖a1+ 26.♗f1



26...e5

Black refrains from the natural 26...♘g6, probably because of the pawn sacrifice 27.e5!? fxe5 28.♖g4. But the computer shows that the white attack is not dangerous: 28...♖d8 29.♖d2 ♖d3!∓.

27.♖dd2 ♘g6 28.h4 ♕f8

Even stronger was 28...♗c6!, so as to meet 29.h5 with 29...♕f8.

29.♕e3 ♘f4

Instead of this tempting move, Dvoretsky recommended 29...♖ca8!, cutting off White's counterplay at the roots.

30.g3 ♘d3 31.♖a2! ♖xa2 32.♖xa2 ♕c5

Ragozin has dreamed up a combination involving a rook sacrifice, which should lead only to a draw. Another, more striking combination was more effective: 32...b4! 33.♗xd3 cxd3 34.cxb4 ♕xb4 35.♕xd3 (35.♔g2 ♗b5) 35...♗b5 36.♕d2 ♕xe4 – Black has an extra pawn and good winning chances.

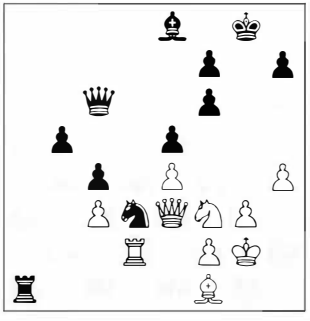
33.♕h6 ♖a8 34.♖d2

It was simpler to take the rook, after which Black has nothing better than perpetual check: 34.♖xa8 ♕xf2+ 35.♔h1 ♕xf1+ 36.♔h2 ♕e2+ (36...♕f2+? 37.♔h3 ♕f1+ 38.♔g4 ♘f2+ 39.♔h5+–) 37.♔h1 ♕xf3+ 38.♔h2 ♕e2+.

34...♕c6 35.♕e3 ♖a1

Worthy of attention was 35...♖a3!? 36.♗xd3 ♖xc3 37.♘xe5 fxe5 38.♕g5+ ♔f8 39.♗e2 ♕e6∓.

36.♔g2



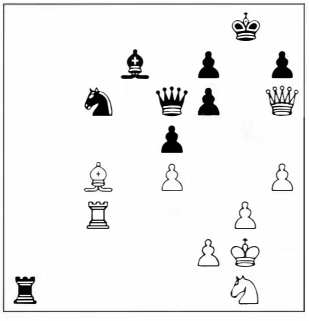
36...b4?

Black did not decide on 36...♘c5, because he was afraid that after 37.♖d5 ♘a4 38.♕d2 White would activate his pieces and obtain dangerous counterplay. But here Black has an unexpected idea: 38...♖a2! 39.♕xa2 ♘xc3 40.♕c2 (he loses after 40.♕d2 ♘xe4 41.♕d1 ♘c3) 40...♘xd5 41.exd5 ♕xd5∓. White has a weak king and the black passed pawns are very dangerous.

37.cxb4 c3 38.♖c2 ♘xb4 39.♖xc3 ♕e6 40.♗c4 ♕d6 41.♗e2

Imperceptibly, the advantage has passed to White. With his last move, he defended the square d1 against the entry of the enemy queen, but it was stronger to do the same thing by 41.♗b3, since in this case, the bishop occupies an active position.

41...♗d7 42.♕h6 ♕e6 43.♘g1 ♘c6 44.♗c4



44...♕g4

Black sacrifices a pawn, in order to force the exchange of queens and secure his king. It was also possible to defend differently, with 44...♕d6 45.♗d5 ♘e7 46.♗b3 ♗c6⇄.

45.♕xf6 ♕xe4+ 46.♘f3 ♕g6 47.♕xg6+ hxg6 48.♗b5

He cannot win the f7 pawn: 48.♘g5 ♘d8 49.♖f3? ♗c6.

48...♘b8 49.♘xe5 ♗xb5 50.♖c8+ ♔g7 51.♖xb8 ♗f1+ 52.♔h2

White keeps some practical chances after 52.♔f3.

52...♖a2 53.♖b7

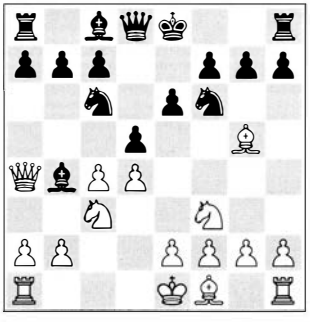
Nothing is changed after 53.♖b1 ♖xf2+ 54.♔g1 ♖f5 55.♘xg6 fxg6 56.♖xf1 ♖a5 with a draw.

53...♖xf2+ 54.♔g1 ♗a6

Draw.

Game 13
l'Ami,Erwin
Jobava,Baadur
Kusadasi 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♗g5



6...♗d7

A solid move: Black escapes from the pin and forces the enemy queen to move to a less active position.

After **6...0-0** play most often transposes into lines already examined, but original positions are also possible: **7.e3 h6 8.♗h4** After Black has castled, this retreat becomes perfectly possible, since now the plan with ...g7-g5 would involve extra risk for Black; 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 – see 6...h6 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.e3 0-0. **8...♗d7** Even so, the move 8...g5 is not out of the question: 9.♗g3 ♘e4 10.♕c2 h5 11.h4 ♘xg3 12.fxg3 g4 13.♘g5 f5 14.0-0-0 ♗xc3 15.♕xc3 ♕d6 16.♕e1 ♗d7 17.♔b1 a5⇄ Regedzinski-Gilg, Bad Oeynhausen 1940. **9.♕c2 ♗e7 10.a3 ♖e8 11.0-0-0** The more cautious plan with kingside castling is worth considering. **11...dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♘d5 13.♗g3 ♘xc3 14.♕xc3 ♗d6 15.e4 ♖b8 16.♗b3 b5 17.e5 b4 18.♕d3 ♗f8⇄** Le Quang Liem-Mahjoob, Visakhapatnam 2008.

7.♕b3

After **7.♕c2** play usually goes into lines we have already seen with 6.♗g5 dxc4 or 6.♗g5 h6. But not always: **7...h6** 7...dxc4 8.e4 h6 9.♗d2 – see 6...dxc4 7.e4 ♗d7 8.♕c2 h6 9.♗d2. **8.♗d2** 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.e3 – see 6...h6 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.e3 ♗d7 9.♕c2. **8...0-0 9.e3 ♖e8 10.a3 ♗xc3** It was better to keep the bishop and retreat to d6 or f8. **11.♗xc3 ♘e4 12.♗d3 ♘xc3 13.♕xc3 ♕e7 14.♖d1 ♖ad8 15.0-0±** Alekhine-Piacentini, Buenos Aires 1926 (exhibition game).

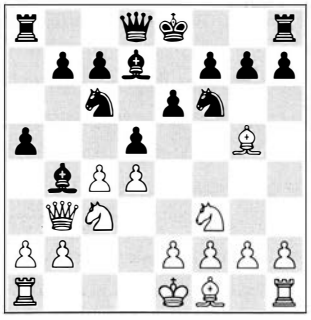
7...a5!?

Quite an aggressive plan: Black wants to seize space on the queenside and drive the queen to c2. More modest play does not promise full equality:

A) **7...♕e7** 8.cxd5 exd5 9.e3 h6 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 11.♗e2 ♗e6 12.0-0

♖d8 13.a3 ♗xc3 14.♕xc3 ♗g4 15.b4 ♖d7 16.♖fc1± Fröhlich-Straub, Budapest 2000;

B) **7...h6** 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.e3 dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♕e7 11.♗d3 (11.a3?! ♘a5! 12.♕xb4 ♕xb4 13.axb4 ♘xc4 14.b3 ♘d6 15.♘e5 ♗b5 16.f3 ♔e7⇄ Mollero-Isonzo, Genoa 2001) 11...0-0 12.0-0±.



8.a3

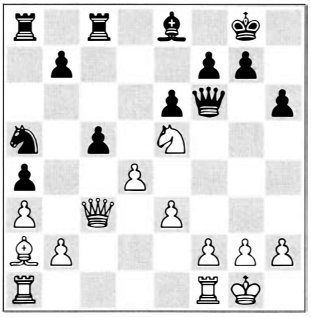
If he does not play this move, the black pawn advances to a3, causing his opponent a good deal of inconvenience, e.g.: **8.e3** a4 9.♕c2 a3 10.♗xf6 axb2 11.♕xb2 ♕xf6 12.cxd5 exd5 13.♗e2 ♖a3 14.♖c1 draw, Lorscheid-Lechtynsky, Budapest 2002.

8...a4 9.♕c2 h6 10.♗xf6 ♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 ♕xf6 12.e3 0-0

Black has somewhat outstripped his opponent in development, and now he begins to prepare an offensive on the queenside.

13.♗e2 dxc4 14.♗xc4 ♖fc8 15.0-0 ♘a5 16.♘e5 ♗e8 17.♗a2 c5

More solid was 17...♘c6 18.♘d3 ♘e7 with a very solid, although passive position. However, Jobava seeks active counterplay.



18.d5!

Expanding the scope of his bishop and establishing a 'shock force' in the centre.

18...exd5

White is better after 18...c4 19.d6 ♖c5 20.f4 ♖d5 21.♖ad1 ♕d8 22.♖xd5 exd5 (Hway Ik Oei-Tompa, Orange 1989) 23.♕d4! ♕xd6 24.♘xc4 ♘xc4 25.♗xc4 ♖d8 26.♖d1±.

19.♗xd5 ♖a7 20.e4 b6 21.f4 ♘c6 22.♕g3

Worth consideration is 22.♖ad1 ♖ac7 (22...♘d4? 23.♖xd4) 23.♘xc6 ♕xc3 24.bxc3 ♗xc6 25.♖b1 with a small advantage in the ending.

22...♘e7?!

The desire to get rid of the bishop on d5 is understandable, but Black misses an excellent chance to activate his pieces with 22...♘d4 23.♖f2 ♖d8⇄.

23.♖ad1 ♘xd5 24.exd5?!

This passed pawn is not so dangerous as it may seem. Stronger was 24.♖xd5 ♗c6 25.♘xc6 ♕xc6 26.♖fd1±.

24...♗b5! 25.♖fe1 ♕d6 26.♕c3 ♖e8

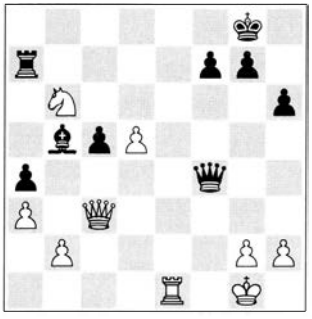
Threatening ...f7-f6 followed by an exchange of rooks and the win of one of

the pawns. The initiative passes to Black; however, nothing terrible has happened to White yet.

27.♘c4?

Panic. After 27.g3 ♖ae7 28.♖e3 f6 29.♘c4 ♕d8 Black is a little better, but no more than that.

27...♖xe1+ 28.♖xe1 ♕xf4 29.♘xb6



29...♖e7!

Probably l'Ami had overlooked this move. The rook joins in the attack and the white king comes into real danger.

30.h3?

Losing at once. More tenacious is 30.♖d1, although here too, after 30...♖e2 31.♔h1 ♖xg2! 32.♔xg2 ♕g4+ 33.♔f2 ♕xd1 34.♕xc5 ♕e2+ 35.♔g3 ♕e5+ Black should win.

30...♕d4+!

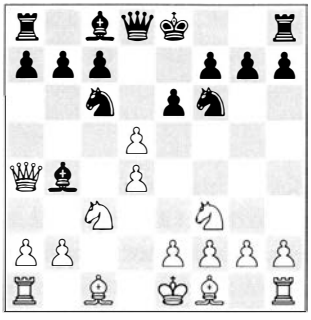
The second deflection in a row wins a rook. White resigned.

Game 14
Mikenas, Vladas
Kirillov, Vladimir
Vilnius 1949

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.cxd5

'This exchange in the centre does not cause Black the slightest trouble. In reply, he can recapture in three ways' – Lipnitsky.

With the aid of a small transposition, White can deprive his opponent of such a wide choice. He only needs to capture on move 5, and Black practically has to recapture with the pawn, and then 6.♕a4+ ♘c6 forces the well-known position. In practice, the vast majority of games go this way, so the recaptures 6...♕xd5 and 6...♘xd5 are not of great practical significance. We will take a brief look at them, just for the sake of completeness.

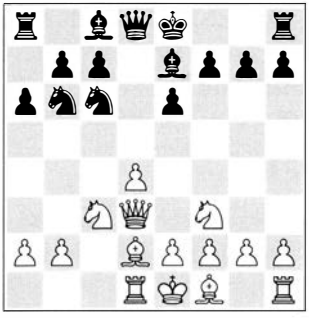


6...e6xd5

In my opinion, the recapture with the queen is insufficient for equality: **6...♕xd5 7.e3** 7.♗d2!?. **7...♗d7** 7...♘e4 8.♗d2 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♘xd2 10.♘xd2; 7...♕a5 8.♕xa5 ♘xa5 9.♗d2±. **8.♗d2 ♗xc3** (Simagin-Osnos, Moscow 1960) **9.bxc3 ♘e5 10.♕d1 ♘xf3+ 11.gxf3±** In all these variations, White's chances are preferable; he has a strong pawn centre and the opponent lacks real counterplay.

The move **6...♘xd5** is perfectly good, but the only problem is that the position cannot be reached without the aid of the opponent! **7.♗d2** 7.♕c2 e5

8.dxe5 ♕e7 9.♗d2 ♗xc3 10.♗xc3 ♗g4 11.e3 ♘xc3 12.♕xc3 ♗xf3 13.gxf3 ♕xe5 14.0-0-0 ♕xc3+ 15.bxc3 ♔e7⇄ Dorfman-Ivanchuk, Cap d'Agde 1998. **7...♘b6 8.♕b5** The black cavalry drive the strongest enemy piece from the queenside: **8...a6 9.♕d3 ♗e7** 9...e5 10.♘xe5 ♕xd4 11.♘xc6 ♕xd3 12.exd3 bxc6 13.♗e2 0-0 14.♘e4± Kholmov-Sokolsky, Vilnius 1955. **10.♖d1**



Analysis diagram

10...e5! With this temporary pawn sacrifice, Black opens the centre and thanks to his lead in development he takes the initiative. Rybka's recommendation is interesting: 10...♘b4 11.♕b1 ♘c4 12.♗f4 ♘d5 13.♗g3 ♘a3! 14.♕c1 ♘xc3 15.bxc3 (White loses after 15.♕xc3? ♗b4!) 15...♕d5 with mutual chances. **11.dxe5** 11.♘xe5 ♕xd4 12.♘xc6 ♕xd3 13.exd3 bxc6 14.♗e2 ♗e6⇄. **11...♕xd3 12.exd3 ♗g4 13.♗e2 0-0-0 14.♗f4 ♗b4!⇄**

'Black's pieces have achieved great activity. The central files are open for his rooks, and the symmetrical position of his bishops is interesting. White is unable to retain his extra pawn' – Lipnitsky.

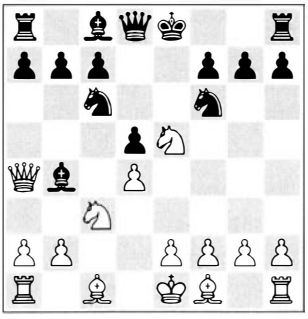
7.♗g5

This developing move is seen in the great majority of games, although occasionally White chooses another move:

A) **7.♗f4** ♘e4 8.♖c1 0-0 9.h3 ♖e8 10.e3 g5 11.♗h2 ♕e7 12.♘e5 f6 13.♘xc6 bxc6∓ Mirzoev-Capellades, La Pobla de Lillet 2009;

B) **7.a3** ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♘e4 9.c4 (9.♗b2 0-0 10.e3 ♘d6 11.♗d3 ♘e7 12.0-0 ♗f5 13.♗e2 a5 14.♘d2 b5 15.♕d1 a4∓ Sadler-Dzhandzhgava, Oakham 1988) 9...0-0 10.e3 ♗g4 11.♗b2 ♕f6 12.♗e2 ♖ad8 13.♖d1 ♖fe8 14.♕c2 ♕g6⇄ Nikolov-Iotov, Pleven 2010;

C) **7.♘e5**



Analysis diagram

Most of the time this move, which loses time, turns out to be a blow in the air. **7...♗d7** The standard reaction; we have already seen the alternative plan 7...a5!?: 8.♗g5 0-0 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.a3 ♗d6 11.e3 ♗d7 12.♕c2 h6 13.♗h4 ♖e8 14.♗e2 ♕e7⇄ Klaman-Chepukaitis, Leningrad 1967. **8.♘xc6** 8.♘xd7 ♕xd7 9.e3 ♘e4 10.♕c2 ♕e6 11.a3 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 0-0 13.♗d3 f5 14.0-0 ♘a5 15.a4 ♖f7⇄ Vojinovic-Kasimdzhanov, France 2010. **8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♗xc6 10.♕a3** 10.♕b3 ♘e4 11.e3 ♕g5 12.♗a3 0-0-0 13.♕b2 ♖he8∓ R. Dimitrov-Palac, Bastia 2009. **10...♘e4 11.♗f4 ♕f6** 11...♗b5

12.♖b1 ♕f6 13.e3 ♗xf1 14.♖xf1 ♕c6 15.f3 ♘d6 16.♗xd6 cxd6 17.♔f2± Pajeken-Stohl, Germany Bundesliga 2001/02. **12.e3 g5 13.♗g3 h5 14.♕b2 ♘xg3 15.hxg3 0-0-0 16.♗e2 h4∓** Lodhi-Serper, Dhaka 1995.



7...0-0

After 7...h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.e3 0-0 we have transposed to a position already seen in the games Mamedyarov-Elianov and Mamedyarov-Kramnik.

Worth attention is **7...♗d7 8.♕b3 a5!? 9.a3** After 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.♕xd5 0-0-0 Black has a strong initiative for the pawn. **9...a4** 'An important moment, which we will often see in the Ragozin Defence. By advancing his pawn to a4, Black has fixed his opponent's queenside and created the conditions for a subsequent annexation of the light squares on that flank' – Lipnitsky. **10.♕c2 ♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 ♘a5 12.e3 ♘e4 13.♕xa5 ♖xa5 14.♗xd8 ♔xd8 15.♘e5 ♗e8 16.♖c1 f6 17.♘d3 c6⇄** Al.Kharitonov-Lysyj, Plovdiv 2008.

Possibly the semi-forgotten move **7...♕d6** is better than its reputation. The fact is that the threat of...♘e4 practically forces White to exchange on f6, and after ...♕xf6 we reach the same position as after 7...h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6, but with the black pawn on h7. This is an important nuance, since in Carlsbad-type positions, the transfer of a rook to h6 significantly strengthens Black's attacking chances on the kingside. Possible then is **8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.e3 0-0 10.♕b3** 10.♗e2 ♗e6 11.0-0 a6 12.♖fd1 ♗d6 13.e4 dxe4 14.♘xe4 ♕f4 15.♘xd6 cxd6 draw, Keres-Bronstein, Tallinn 1973. **10...♗e6 11.♗d3 a5 12.0-0 ♘e7 13.♘b5 c5 14.dxc5 ♗xc5 15.♘c7 ♖ac8 16.♕xb7 ♖b8 17.♕a6 ♗b6 18.♘xe6 fxe6 19.♗c2 e5⩲** Ghaem Maghami-Hou Yifan, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

8.e3 h6

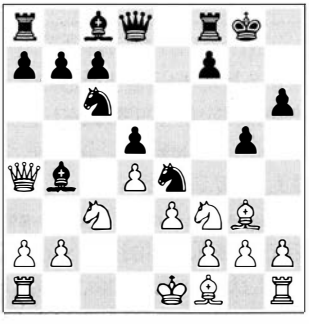
Black immediately forces the enemy bishop to declare its intentions.

8...♕d6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 – see 7...♕d6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.e3 0-0.

9.♗h4?!

Stronger is **9.♗xf6 ♕xf6**, as in the two Mamedyarov games we have already seen.

9...g5 10.♗g3 ♘e4



'The first skirmish has ended in Black's favour, since he has started dictating. His outpost knight on e4 now takes aim

at both flanks. White needs to switch to defence' – Lipnitsky.

11.♖c1 h5

'This is the whole point! Fearlessly throwing his pawns forward in front of his own king, Black threatens to capture the enemy bishop. After the natural 12.h4 there follows the exchange of knight for bishop on g3, followed by an attack on the weaknesses at e3 and g3' – Lipnitsky.

12.♘e5

'As is well known, in most cases the best form of defence is active counterplay. Mikenas follows this recipe' – Lipnitsky.
Black is better after 12.♗b5 h4 13.♗e5 f6 14.♗xc6 ♗xc3+ 15.bxc3 fxe5 16.♘xe5 (Meduna-Wirthensohn, Lenk 1989) 16...bxc6 17.♕xc6 ♗f5 18.f3 ♖f6 19.♕a4 ♘d6∓.

12...h4

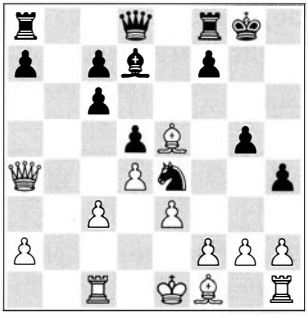
Too direct. Worth consideration was **12...♗xc3+!?** 13.bxc3 ♘xe5 14.♗xe5 f6 15.f3 fxe5 16.fxe4 ♕f6∓.

13.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ 14.bxc3 bxc6 15.♗e5

Both **15.♕xc6?** hxg3 16.♕xa8 gxf2+ 17.♔d1 ♗g4+ winning the queen, and **15.f3** ♘xg3 16.hxg3 ♕e7 with a strong attack, are bad.

15...♗d7

The following has also been seen: **15...f6** 16.♕xc6 fxe5 17.♕g6+ (17.♕xa8?! ♘xf2 18.♖g1 ♕d6↑) 17...♔h8 18.♕h6+ ♔g8 with a draw in the game Rossetto-Lengyel, Varna 1962.



16.♕a5

'The whole of White's defensive plan is built around this move. He finally rescues his bishop from danger and attacks the pawn on c7. But the text-move has a definite drawback: the white queen strays a long way from the centre of action' – Lipnitsky.
Also possible is **16.f3** f6 17.♗xc7 ♕xc7 18.fxe4 ♔g7 19.♗d3 dxe4 20.♗c4!⇄.

16...♕e7!

'Well played! White's forces are scattered and his king is in the centre. Kirillov, in leaving the c7 pawn undefended, tries to prepare a direct blow, before the opponent can correct the defects in his position. It would be a serious mistake to play to defend the c7 pawn (e.g. with 16...♘d6??), since in this case, Black would squander his initiative' – Lipnitsky.

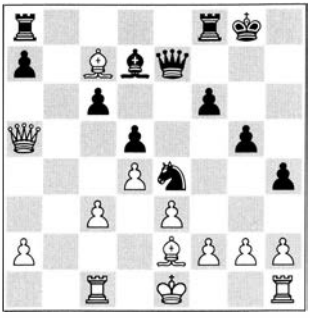
17.♗e2

He loses after 17.♕xc7 f6 18.f3 fxe5 19.fxe4 exd4 20.cxd4 ♕b4+! 21.♔d1 ♗g4+, and 17.♗xc7 ♖fe8 18.♕b4 c5 19.♕b2 ♖ac8 is also bad, but it was possible to play **17.♗d3!** f6 18.♗xc7 ♖ac8⩲.

17...f6

By forcing the opponent to capture on c7, Black opens the c-file.

18.♗xc7



18...♘xf2?!

An interesting piece sacrifice, but the idea should have been carried out more precisely: **18...h3!** 19.0-0 (19.gxh3 ♘xf2! 20.♔xf2 ♖ae8 21.♔g3 ♕xe3+ 22.♗f3 f5−+) 19...♘d2 (19...hxg2 20.♖fd1) 20.♗d3 ♘xf1 21.♔xf1 hxg2+ 22.♔xg2 ♕e6 with a strong attack.

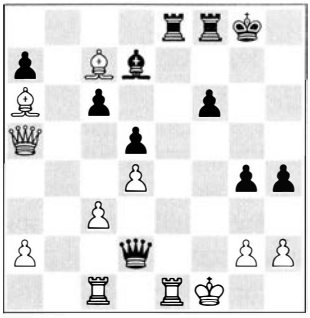
19.♔xf2 ♖ae8 20.♖he1 ♕xe3+ 21.♔f1 g4

Black's attack looks very dangerous, as he threatens both ...h4-h3, and ...g4-g3. White has only one defence, but it is adequate.

22.♗a6!

'It is extremely rare to see such a defensive move. But White has no other way to attack the enemy queen, and take control of the square d3. An extremely interesting situation has arisen: the distance of the white bishops from his king does not prevent them covering a number of important squares around it. Only the white queen is playing a purely spectator role' – Lipnitsky.

22...♕d2



23.♖cd1?!

This is sufficient for equality, but White could already have looked for more: 23.c4! (including the queen in the defence) 23...♕d3+ (23...♖xe1+ 24.♖xe1 ♕d3+ 25.♔g1 ♕xd4+ 26.♔h1 h3 27.cxd5 ♗f5 28.♗f1±) 24.♔g1 ♕xd4+ 25.♔h1 h3 26.cxd5 ♖xe1+ 27.♕xe1 ♖e8 28.♕f1 hxg2+ 29.♔xg2! (the only move; after 29.♕xg2? ♗f5 Black wins) 29...♕e4+ 30.♔g1 ♕e3+ 31.♔h1 ♗f5 32.♕xf5 ♕xc1+ 33.♗f1±.

23...♖xe1+ 24.♖xe1 g3!

On 24...h3 very strong is 25.♖e7! (after 25.♖e2 ♕c1+ 26.♔f2 f5! Black has enough activity to draw, e.g.: 27.♕b4 g3+ 28.♔xg3 hxg2 29.♔xg2 f4) 25...♖f7 26.♕b4 ♕xg2+ (26...hxg2+ 27.♔g1±) 27.♔e1±.

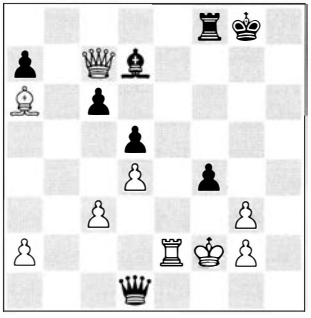
25.♗xg3!

25.hxg3 loses because of 25...h3 26.♖e2 ♕c1+ 27.♖e1 hxg2+ 28.♔xg2 ♕xe1.

25...hxg3 26.hxg3 f5

'A third kingside pawn advances, to create a new threat. But the worst is already behind White. Now he can easily repulse the new enemy attack' – Lipnitsky.

27.♖e2 ♕d1+ 28.♔f2 f4 29.♕c7



29...f3

Black can give perpetual check with 29...fxg3+ 30.♔xg3 ♕c1 31.♕xd7 ♕f4+ 32.♔h3 ♕h6+ 33.♔g3, but since he is not risking anything, he decides to continue the attack.

30.gxf3 ♗g4 31.f4 ♕h1

It makes no sense to take the exchange, since after 31...♗xe2 32.♗xe2 ♕h1 33.♕e5 only White can play for a win.

32.♖e3 ♕h2+ 33.♔e1??

'Over the course of 22 moves, Mikenas has defended stoutly. He only needed to play one more accurate move, 33.♔f1, in order to compel Black to admit the futility of playing for a win any longer. Perpetual check would have been a fitting end to this interesting, if not error-free game, in which both players have showed great inventiveness. Instead, White commits a terrible blunder' – Lipnitsky.

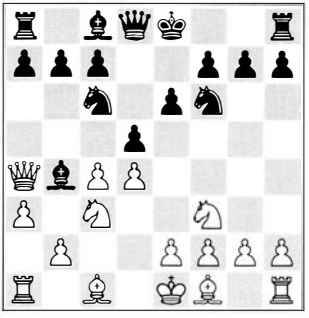
33...♕g1+

Mate is forced. White resigned. The game shows that the bishop retreat to h4 often allows Black to develop a very strong initiative.

Game 15
Makogonov,Vladimir
Romanovsky,Petr
Leningrad 1939

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.a3

'By forcing the exchange on c3, White obtains the two bishops and retains the possibility of playing e2-e3 or developing the bishop to g5 (without sacrificing a pawn as after 6.♗g5). But to do so, White falls behind in development and weakens the light squares on his queenside' – Lipnitsky.



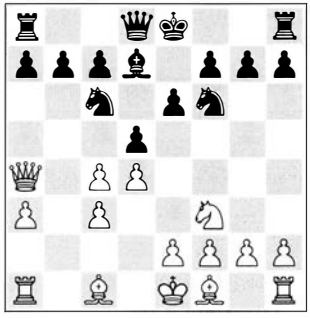
6...♗xc3+

This is the usual move, although nobody has yet shown that there is anything much wrong with the retreat **6...♗e7**. Here are a few examples: **7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗f4 0-0 9.e3 ♗f5** 9...♘h5 10.♗g3 ♗e6 11.♗d3 a6 12.♖c1 ♘xg3 13.hxg3 h6 14.♗b1 ♗g5 15.♕d1 g6 16.♘a4± Milos-Van Riemsdijk, Rio de Janeiro 2007. **10.♗a6** A striking move, but firstly, Black is not obliged to take the bishop, and secondly, even if he does, he has good counterplay, despite his damaged pawn structure. Therefore, perhaps the move 10.♗b5!? is better. **10...♖b8** 10...bxa6!? 11.♕xc6 ♖b8

12.b4 ♖b6 13.♕a4 ♘h5 14.♗g3 ♖h6! – we have already spoken of the fact that a rook on h6 excellently supports Black's kingside attack in such positions – 15.0-0 ♘xg3 16.hxg3 ♗d6⇄ Kramnik-Bareev, Kazan 1997. **11.♗b5 ♘h5 12.♗g3 ♘xg3 13.hxg3 ♕d6 14.♘h4 ♗d7 15.♗d3 g6 16.♕b3 ♗e6⇄** Iskusnikh-Kupreichik, Omsk/Perm 1998.

7.bxc3 0-0

The alternative is **7...♗d7**



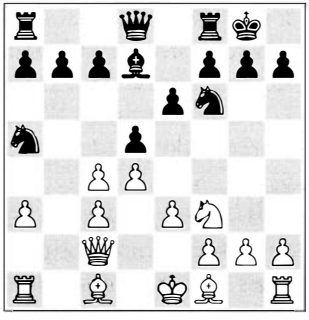
Analysis diagram

8.cxd5 It was possible to meet the threat of ...♘xd4 in other ways, by moving the queen from a4, e.g.: 8.♕c2 h6 9.e3 0-0 10.♗d3 dxc4 11.♗xc4 ♘a5 12.♗e2 c5 13.a4 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♖c8 15.♕b2 ♘c4 16.♗xc4 ♖xc4 17.0-0 ♕c7∓ Miton-Bartel, Prievidza 2009. **8...exd5 9.♗g5** 9.♕c2 ♘a5 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 c5 12.e3 ♖c8 13.♗d3 0-0 14.0-0 cxd4 15.exd4 ♘c4 16.♖fe1 ♘d6 17.♖e3 ♖e8 18.♘e5 g5 19.♗g3 ♘fe4⇄ Sakaev-Gutov, Smolensk 2000. **9...h6!** The attempt to solve all his problems by tactical means is less successful: 9...♘e5 10.♕b4! ♘xf3+ 11.gxf3 ♗c6 12.e3 ♕e7 13.♗f4 ♕xb4 14.axb4 ♔d8 15.♗d3. 'White does not worry about keeping the bishop pair for the endgame, since the exchange of one of them will open another file for his rook' – Lipnitsky. 15...♘h5 16.♗g3 ♘xg3 17.hxg3 h5 18.f4. The white rooks exert pressure along the rooks' files, and his bishop is rather more active than its opposite number. This position arose in the game V. Makogonov-Sokolsky, Moscow 1944. White gradually realised his advantage. **10.♗xf6** 10.♗h4 g5 11.♗g3 ♘e4?. **10...♕xf6** – transposes into a position from the game Makogonov-Keres.

The move **7...♘e4** is considered in the game Carlsen-Koneru.

8.♗g5

By bringing the bishop out to g5, White usually agrees in some form or other to exchange it for the knight on f6. It is also possible to leave the bishop on c1 for the time being, hoping later to play it to a3 or b2 (in the latter case hoping to advance c3-c4 after a preliminary exchange on d5). But there is a risk that the dark-squared bishop will remain passive: **8.e3 ♗d7** 8...♖e8 9.♕c2 ♘a5 10.cxd5 exd5 11.a4 c5 12.dxc5 ♕c7 13.♗a3 ♘e4 14.♖d1 ♗e6 15.♗b5 ♖ed8⇄ Ivanisevic-Gyimesi, Murska Sobota 2008. **9.♕c2 ♘a5!**

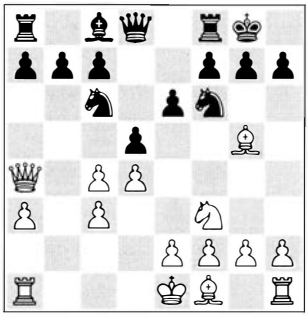


Analysis diagram

'We have seen this characteristic manoeuvre a number of times. Black tries to force the exchange of the white c4 pawn for his d5 pawn, so as A) to open lines in the centre for his rook and bishop; B) further to weaken the light squares in White's camp; and C) prepare the important blow ...c7-c5' – Lipnitsky.

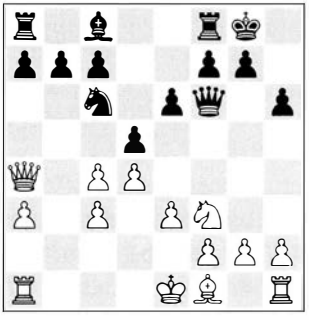
A) **10.♘e5** 'White resists, but Black has another good method' – Lipnitsky. **10...dxc4 11.♘xc4 c5! 12.♘xa5 ♕xa5** 'Black has the initiative and forces White to go over to defence.' **13.♗d2 ♖fc8 14.♗d3 cxd4 15.exd4 ♕d5 16.0-0 ♗b5!**, E.Richter-Prucha, Prague 1945. 'After the exchange of light-squared bishops, Black obtains an obvious advantage. White has very vulnerable blockaded central pawns and incurably weak queenside light squares.'

B) **10.cxd5 exd5 11.a4 ♖e8 12.♗d3 c5!** Less good is 12...♘c4, since White can at the appropriate moment exchange on c4 and advance e3-e4, obtaining an advantage in the centre: 13.0-0 ♘e4 14.♗xc4 dxc4 15.♘e5 ♘d6 16.e4 ♗e6 17.♗f4 f6 18.♘f3 f5 19.♗xd6 cxd6 20.♖fe1± Akobian-Perelshteyn, Lubbock 2008. **13.dxc5** Otherwise after ...c5-c4 a cramp of his queenside starts. **13...♕c7** 13...♖c8 14.♗a3 ♘c4 15.♗xc4 dxc4 16.0-0 ♗c6 17.♘d4 ♘g4 18.h3 ♗xg2! 19.♔xg2 ♕g5 20.f4 ♘xe3+ 21.♔h2 ♕h5 22.♕d2 ♘xf1+ 23.♖xf1 ♖e4⇄ M. Gurevich-Luther, Wijk aan Zee 2001. **14.♗a3 ♘c4 15.0-0** It was better to give up the light-squared bishop – 15.♗xc4, by analogy with the game Gurevich-Luther. **15...♘xa3 16.♖xa3 ♕xc5 17.♕b2 b6 18.♖fa1 ♘e4** – Black has the initiative, Kramnik-Grischuk, Moscow 2009 (blitz).



8...♘e7

This idea of Romanovsky's has not found any followers. Usually Black plays **8...h6** here, and after **9.♗xf6** (9.♗h4 g5 10.♗g3 ♘e4 11.♕c2 h5 12.♘e5 h4 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.f3 ♘d6 15.♗xd6 cxd6 16.e4 ♕f6⇄ Van Wely-Milov, Biel 2000) **9...♕xf6 10.e3** we reach another opening *tabiya*.

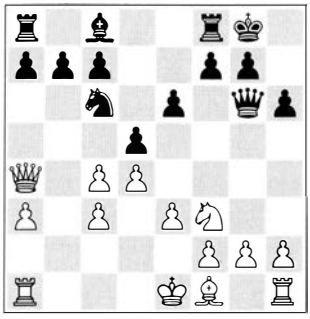


Analysis diagram

A) **10...♖d8** 11.♗d3 ♗d7 12.cxd5 exd5 13.0-0 b6 14.♕c2 ♘a5 15.♘e5 c5 16.f4 c4 17.♗h7+ ♔h8 18.♖f3? Dreev-Schandorff, Fügen 2006;

B) In the following game, Black carried out a typical Ragozin plan – to exchange on c4 and advance ...e6-e5: **10...♗d7** 11.♕c2 ♖fe8 12.♗d3 dxc4 13.♗xc4 e5 14.0-0 ♗f5 15.♕a2 e4 16.♘d2 ♘a5 17.f3 ♘xc4 18.♕xc4 ♕g6 19.fxe4 ♗xe4 20.♘xe4 ♖xe4 21.♕xc7 ♖xe3⇄ Dreev-Gelashvili, Ermioni 2006;

C) **10...♕g6**



Analysis diagram

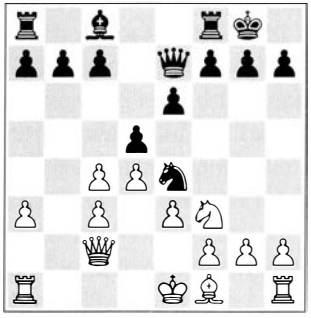
11.g3!? 11.♖c1 ♖d8 12.♕c2 ♕xc2 13.♖xc2 dxc4 14.♗xc4 b6 15.♗e2 ♗b7 16.c4 ♘e7 17.c5 ♗e4 18.♖c3 ♖ab8 19.0-0 b5 20.♘d2 ♗d5 21.♖b1 a6⇄ V.Popov-Taimanov, St. Petersburg 2001 (rapid); 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♕d1 ♖d8 13.h3 ♘a5 14.♗d3 ♕f6 15.♘e5 ♕g5 16.g3 ♘c6 17.♘xc6 bxc6 18.h4 ♕f6 19.♖b1 c5⇄ Aseev-Zviagintsev, St. Petersburg 1994; 11.h4 ♗d7 12.h5 ♕f6 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♗d3 ♗g4 15.♖h4 ♗xf3 16.♖f4 ♕g5 17.gxf3 ♕g1+ 18.♗f1 ♖ae8∓ Van Wely-Pokorna, Vlissingen 2001. **11...a6 12.♕d1 dxc4 13.♗xc4 e5 14.0-0 e4 15.♘d2 ♘e7 16.♕b1 b5 17.♗e2 ♗f5 18.c4 ♖ab8 19.cxb5 axb5 20.♖c1±** Aseev-Alexandrov, Ohrid 2001.

9.e3

'White resists the temptation to "spoil his opponent's pawns" with ♗xf6, not wishing to open the g-file and instead provokes the knight to jump into e4, where it occupies an unstable position and will soon have to move away' – Makogonov.

It was also possible to take on f6, although in this case, Black obtains definite counterplay: **9.♗xf6** gxf6 10.e3 ♗d7 11.♕b3 c5 12.♗d3 cxd4 13.cxd4 dxc4 14.♗xc4 ♗c6 15.0-0 ♔h8 16.♖fe1 ♖g8 17.e4± Malakhatko-Kolosowski, Polanica Zdroj 2001.

9...♘e4 10.♗xe7 ♕xe7 11.♕c2



11...b6

'It is understandable that he wishes to bring his light-squared bishop into play as quickly as possible, and equalise the position, but without the advance of the c-pawn this is impossible. Therefore he should have played 11...c5' – Makogonov.

12.♗d3 ♗b7 13.0-0 ♖ac8

'The passive method of defending the queenside, chosen by Romanovsky, is clearly bad. Essential was 13...♘f6 followed by ...c7-c5' – Makogonov.

I think Vladimir Andreevich slightly dramatises things. Black has a very solid position, and it is hard to spoil it with one inaccurate move. Besides, his last move was not so bad.

14.a4 a5 15.♖fb1

White's plan is revealed – he wants to advance c4-c5 and create pressure along the b-file.

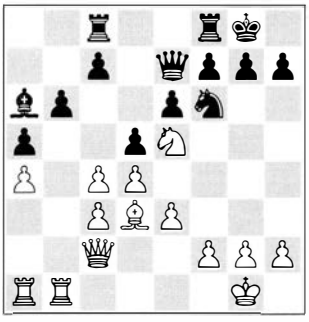
15...♗a6

The move 15...♗a8!? was worth consideration, with the idea of meeting

16.c5 with 16...bxc5 17.♖b5 c6! 18.♖xa5 ♕c7, winning the exchange. Of course, the bishop on a8 looks unattractive, but it can gradually emerge from the corner.

16.♘e5 ♘f6

White is better after 16...f6 17.cxd5! ♗xd3 18.♘xd3 exd5 19.♘f4.



17.c5!

'The white c-pawn gets to where its opposite number has not managed. Now White can squeeze the enemy queenside' – Makogonov.

17...♗xd3 18.♘xd3 ♘d7 19.♖b5 ♖b8 20.♖ab1 g6 21.g3

It was also possible to play 21.c4 at once, but White is in no hurry and methodically strengthens his pressure.

21...♖fc8 22.c4 dxc4 23.♕xc4 ♕f8 24.♖c1 c6

This attempt to obtain some sort of counterplay only leads to the creation of new weaknesses in the black position.

25.♖b3 bxc5 26.♘xc5 ♖xb3 27.♕xb3 ♖b8 28.♘xd7!

White transposes into a rook ending with an extra pawn.

28...♖xb3 29.♘xf8 ♔xf8 30.♖c5

Not 30.♖xc6? ♖b4 and Black regains the pawn and equalises the chances.

30...♔e7 31.♖xa5 ♖a3



'The resulting rook ending is completely hopeless for Black. He is a pawn down, and has a noticeable weakness on c6' – Makogonov.

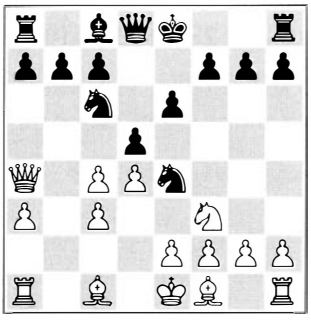
32.g4 h6 33.h4 f5 34.gxf5 gxf5 35.♔g2 ♖a2 36.♔g3 ♔f6 37.♖a6 ♔f7 38.a5 ♔f6 39.♖a8 ♔f7 40.a6 ♔g7 41.a7

Here the game was adjourned and Black resigned without resuming. His king is tied to the squares g7 and h7, and his rook to the a-file, so the white king can march into the enemy position without any particular problem.

Game 16
Carlsen,Magnus
Koneru,Humpy
Cap d'Agde 2008 (rapid)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♘e4

Black tries to organise play on the light squares at once.



8.♗b2

Carlsen decides to keep his queen in an active position, where it defends the c4 pawn and exerts pressure on the whole black queenside.

The alternative was **8.♕c2 0-0** More direct play is also possible, aiming to organise a blockade on the light squares: 8...♘d6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♗g5 ♘e7! 11.e3 ♗f5 12.♕b3 c6 13.♗e2 ♕b6 14.♕a2 ♘g6 15.♘h4 ♘xh4 16.♗xh4 ♕a5 17.♖c1 b5⇄ Portisch-Wade, Hastings 1970/71; 8...♘a5 9.e3 b6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗b5+ c6 12.♗d3 0-0 13.0-0 ♗f5 14.♖e1 c5 15.♘d2 c4 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.a4 ♖e8 18.♗a3 ♕g5 19.♗d6 h5 20.♗f4 ♕g6 21.♔h1 h4⇄ Arkell-Milov, France 2002. **9.e3**

The following examples show that Black has sufficiently straightforward and easy play here:

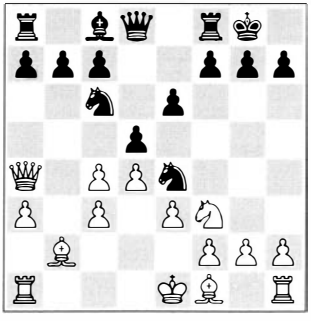
A) **9...♘a5** 10.♗d3 b6 11.♘d2 f5 12.cxd5 exd5 13.0-0 ♗b7 14.♘f3 c5 15.♘e5 ♕c8 16.f3 ♘d6 17.♕e2 ♕e6 18.♖a2 ♖ac8 19.♕e1 ♘ac4 20.♘xc4 ♘xc4 21.♖e2 ♘d6∓ Granda Zuniga-Koneru, Zafra 2009;

B) **9...b6** 10.♗d3 ♗a6 11.0-0 ♘a5 12.cxd5 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 exd5 14.♘d2 f5 15.f3 ♘xd2 16.♗xd2 ♕d7 17.♗e1 ♖ae8 18.♗g3 ♘c4∓ Van Wely-Ehlvest, Panormo 2002 (blitz).

8...0-0

Here too, Black can immediately start a fight for the c4-square: 8...♘d6 9.♘d2 ♗d7 10.c5 ♘c4 11.♘xc4 ♘e5! 12.♕c2 ♘xc4 13.e3 ♗b5 14.♗d3 ♕d7 (the final part of Black's plan – prepare the exchange of light-squared bishops) 15.0-0 ♘a5 16.e4 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3 0-0⇄ Sedlak-Palac, Banja Vrucica 2009.

9.e3



9...♗d7

As usual, Black wishes to dislodge the enemy queen, so as to obtain greater freedom of action on the queenside. Tatiana Kosintseva recently played the same idea in a different form: **9...♕e8!?** As with 9...♗d7, threatening 10...♘xd4. **10.♕c2 ♘a5 11.♗d3 b6** Thanks to the fact that Black has left the bishop on c8, it now threatens to come out to a6. **12.cxd5 exd5 13.0-0 ♗b7 14.a4 ♘c4** The black knights are well-placed on c4 and e4. **15.♘e5** Without this tactical resource, White would simply stand worse. **15...♘xe5 16.dxe5 ♕xe5 17.c4 ♕e6 18.cxd5 ♗xd5 19.♕xc7 ♘c5⇄** Van Wely-T.Kosintseva, Moscow 2010.

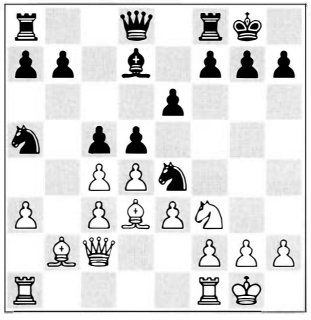
10.♕c2 ♘a5

After **10...f5** 11.♗d3 ♗e8 12.cxd5 exd5 13.c4 White overcomes the light-square blockade: 13...♗f7 14.0-0 ♗e6 15.♖ac1± Sakaev-Ehlvest, Panormo 2002 (blitz).

11.♗d3 c5

Whilst White is completing his development, Black carries out his plan.

12.0-0



12...cxd4

It seems to me that this exchange favours White, who later obtains the possibility of bringing his dark-squared bishop into play via c1. It was worth considering 12...f5, strengthening the knight on e4, although admittedly, in this case, the white knight would get the uncontested use of e5.

13.exd4

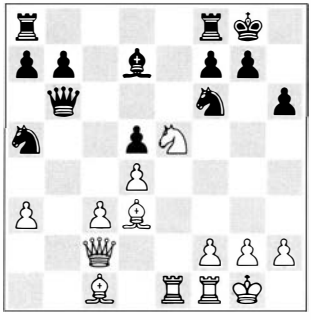
Not 13.cxd4? because of 13...♘xc4 14.♗xc4 ♖c8∓.

13...♘f6

Black has also played **13...♗c6 14.♘e5 ♘f6** (Sakaev-Milov, Panormo 2002 blitz), and here White could have obtained the better game by **15.cxd5 exd5** (15...♕xd5 16.f3 ♕b3 17.♕e2 ♘d5 18.♗c2 ♕b6 19.c4 ♘f4 20.♕d2±; 15...♘xd5? 16.♗xh7+; 15...♗xd5 16.c4 ♖c8 17.♕e2 ♗c6 18.♗c3±) **16.♖fe1 ♖e8 17.♗c1 ♘c4 18.♗f4**±.

14.cxd5 exd5 15.♘e5 h6 16.♖ae1 ♕b6 17.♗c1?!

We should not forget that this was a rapid game, and so the players will have taken various decisions on intuition. Carlsen directs his bishop against h6, hoping to organise an attack on the king. But **17.a4** was worth consideration, preventing the exchange of light-squared bishops, e.g. 17...♕b3 (17...♖fe8 18.♗a3 ♕c7 19.♖e3±) 18.♘xd7 ♘xd7 19.♕xb3 ♘xb3 20.♖e7±.



17...♗b5!

This exchange significantly reduces White's attacking potential.

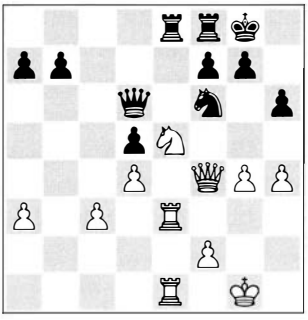
18.♗xb5 ♕xb5 19.♕f5 ♕a6 20.♖e3 ♘b3?!

Chasing after the other bishop is wrong, and instead, he should have tried to exchange the knight at e5: 20...♖ac8 21.♖fe1 (after 21.♖g3 ♘e4! the pawn h6 is defended by the queen and Black takes the initiative) 21...♘c4⇄.

21.g4!

Magnus plays without preconceptions and launches a kingside storm.

21...♘xc1 22.♖xc1 ♖ae8 23.♖ce1 ♕e6 24.♕f4 ♕d6 25.h4



25...♘d7?!

More tenacious is 25...♘e4, although here too, after 26.c4! (26.f3 ♘xc3 27.♖xc3 f6 28.♔g2 ♖e6⇄) 26...♘d2 27.c5 ♕d8 28.♔g2 White's attacking line-up looks very threatening.

26.♘d3 ♕xf4 27.♘xf4 ♖xe3 28.♖xe3 ♘b6 29.♖e7

The endgame is very unpleasant for Black – his pieces are passive, and all three queenside pawns are vulnerable.

29...♖c8

It was hardly possible to hold the position after 29...♖b8 30.♖c7 ♔f8 31.♔f1.

30.♖xb7 ♖xc3 31.♖xa7 ♖c4 32.♘e2 ♖c2 33.♘g3 ♘c4 34.♘f5 ♘d2 35.♘e7+

White pockets the pawn, but if the computer can be believed, it was stronger to play the direct 35.a4!. In either case, it is extremely hard for Black to defend.

35...♔h7 36.♘xd5 ♖c4 37.♖xf7 ♖xd4 38.♘e3 ♖a4 39.♔g2 ♔g8 40.♖c7 ♘b3 41.h5 ♔f8 42.♖c4 ♖a7

If 42...♖xa3, then 43.♖c3, and Black cannot free herself.

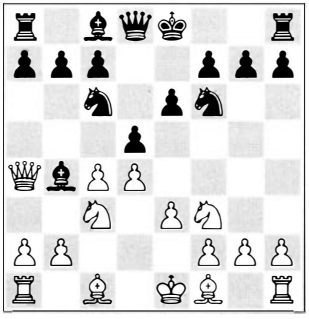
43.a4 ♘a5 44.♖c3 ♔f7 45.♘f5 ♔f6 46.♔g3 ♖b7 47.♖c5 ♖a7 48.♘d4 ♖d7 49.♖xa5 ♖xd4 50.♖f5+ ♔e6 51.a5 ♖a4 52.f3 ♔e7 53.♔f2 ♖a3 54.♔e2

Black resigned.

Game 17
Reshevsky,Samuel
Ragozin,Viacheslav
Semmering – Baden 1937

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.e3

'White refrains from attempts to clarify the position at once, with moves such as 6.♘e5, the gambit 6.♗g5, the exchange 6.cxd5 or the simplifying 6.a3. The quiet continuation 6.e3, despite its outward modesty, is more promising. White strengthens his position in the centre and does not lose unnecessary tempi in the opening' – Lipnitsky.



6...0-0

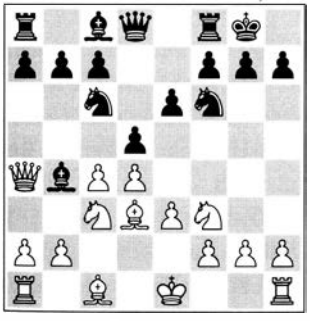
A solid developing move. The attempt to clarify the central position at once is less good, e.g. 6...dxc4 is better delayed until White has moved his king's bishop. The attempt to create complications immediately with **6...♘e4** can be parried without undue effort: **7.♕c2 ♗a5 8.♗e2** It was also possible simply to defend the b4 square by playing 8.a3!?. **8...♘b4 9.♕a4+ ♘c6 10.♕b3 b6 11.cxd5 ♕xd5 12.♗c4 ♕d6 13.♕c2 ♕b4 14.♗d3 ♘xc3 15.♗d2 ♕a4 16.♕xa4 ♘xa4 17.♗b5 ♗d7 18.♗xa4±** B.Socko-Alexandrov, Wroclaw 2009.

7.♗d2

'White's 7th move and the associated plan was suggested by Alekhine back in 1924. The point of this continuation is as follows: after developing his queenside, White plays his rook to d1, so as to prevent the freeing break ...e6-e5. The bishop on f1 remains at home for the time being, so as to recapture on c4 without loss of tempo' – Lipnitsky.

We will look at a few alternatives:

A) **7.♗d3**



Analysis diagram

White goes to meet his opponent and does not bother fighting for a tempo over the exchange on c4. As a result, Black easily gets in ...e6-e5 and obtains satisfactory play. **7...dxc4** In the following game, Black moves his bishop back and forth rather strangely between b4 and d6: 7...♕e7 8.♗d2 ♗d7 9.♕c2 dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♗d6 11.♘b5 ♗b4 12.0-0 a6 13.♘c3 ♗d6 (Rabar-Kostic, Zagreb 1946) 14.a3 h6 15.♖fe1±. **8.♗xc4 ♕e7 9.0-0 ♗d7 10.♕c2 e5 11.♘d5 ♘xd5 12.♗xd5 exd4 13.exd4 ♕f6 14.♗e4 h6 15.d5 ♘d4 16.♘xd4 ♕xd4 17.♗e3** 17.♕xc7?! ♗b5∓. **17...♕e5=** Rukavina-Ljubojevic, Vrbas 1982;

B) **7.a3**

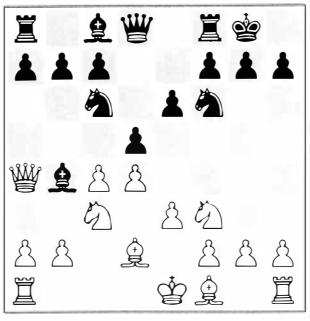


Analysis diagram

'Unlike previous lines we have looked at, here White plays a3 after playing e2-e3, shutting in his dark-squared bishop. Just as in the previous variations, Black obtains excellent results, by first bringing his pieces into play and seizing the initiative' – Lipnitsky. **7...♗xc3+** With the move 7...♗d6?! Black wrongly draws the fire upon himself – White seizes space on the queenside and the break ...e6-e5 turns out not to be so effective: 8.c5 ♗e7 9.b4 e5 10.dxe5 ♘g4 11.♗b2 ♘cxe5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♖d1± Carlsen-Elianov, Moscow 2008 (blitz). Somewhat better is 7...♗e7, but here too, Black obtains a rather cramped position

without counterplay: 8.b4 a6 9.♗b2 ♖e8 10.♕c2 dxc4 11.♗xc4 b5 12.♗d3 ♗b7 13.♘e4± Akobian-B.Socko, Beijing 2008 (rapid). **8.bxc3** Here the moves **8...♗d7** and **8...♖e8** are examined in the note to Black's 8th move in the game Makogonov-Romanovsky, whilst the variation **8...♘e4 9.♗b2** is seen in Carlsen-Koneru;

C) **7.♕c2 a6 8.♗d2** – see 7.♗d2 a6 8.♕c2.



7...a6

'Black does not reveal his plans for the time being, instead playing a move which will turn out useful for his queenside play later on' – Lipnitsky.

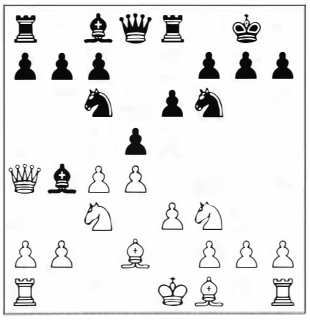
A great many different plans have been tried in this position:

A) **7...♗xc3** 8.♗xc3 ♘e4 9.♗d3 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 dxc4 11.♗xc4 ♗d7 12.♕c2 ♘e7 13.♗d3 g6 14.0-0± Damljanovic-Govedarica, Skender Vakuf 1980;

B) **7...♕e7** 8.a3 ♗xc3 9.♗xc3 ♘e4 10.♕c2 a5 11.♗d3 f5 12.0-0 ♗d7 13.♖ac1 a4 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♗b5 ♖f6 16.♗xa4 f4 17.♗b3 ♗e6 18.exf4 ♖xf4 (Sulava-Petkov, Metz 2007) 19.♖ce1±;

C) **7...♕e8** 8.♕c2 dxc4 9.♗xc4 e5 10.d5 ♘e7 11.♘xe5 ♘exd5 12.♘xd5 ♗xd2+ 13.♕xd2 ♕xe5 14.♕c3 ♕xc3+ 15.♘xc3 ♖d8 16.f3± Gagunashvili-Atalik, Kocaeli 2008;

D) **7...♖e8**:



Analysis diagram

D1) **8.a3 ♗f8** 8...♗d6 9.c5 ♗f8 10.♗e2 ♗d7 11.0-0 a6 12.♕c2 e5 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.b4 ♘xf3+ 15.♗xf3 ♗g4 16.♗xg4 ♘xg4 17.h3 ♘e5 18.♘e2 c6 19.♗c3± Krasenkow-Alexandrov, Warsaw 2009. **9.♕c2** 9.♖d1 a6 10.♕c2 h6 11.♗c1 ♗d7 12.♗e2 dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♗d6 14.0-0 ♕e7 15.♘e4 ♘xe4 16.♕xe4 ♘a5 17.♗a2 ♗a4 18.♖d2 ♘b3 19.♖d3 ♘xc1 20.♖xc1 ♗b5 21.♖dc3 ♗c6 22.♕g4 ♖ad8⇄ Maevsky-Shimanov, Rijeka 2010. **9...h6 10.0-0-0 a6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♗d3 b5 13.h4 b4 14.♘a2 ♖b8 15.♘xb4** 15.♕xc6 ♗d7 16.♕xa6 bxa3→. **15...♘xb4 16.♗xb4 ♗xb4 17.axb4 ♖xb4 18.♘e5 ♗d7 19.♕c5 ♕b8**, Makarov-Matlakov, St. Petersburg 2010;

D2) **8.♖d1 a6** 8...♗f8 9.♗e2 ♗d7 10.cxd5 exd5 11.a3 ♘e5 12.♕b3 ♘xf3+ 13.♗xf3 ♗c6 14.0-0 draw, Dydyshko-Hracek, Czech Republic 2007/08. **9.a3 ♗f8 10.♕c2 h6 11.♗c1 ♕e7 12.h3 dxc4 13.♗xc4 b5 14.♗a2 ♗b7 15.0-0 ♖ad8 16.e4 e5 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.♗xd5±** Moiseenko-B.Savchenko, Sochi 2007;

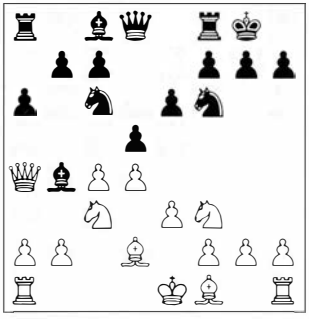
D3) Note the plan adopted by Kramnik – probably the best specialist in the Ragozin Defence: **8.♕c2 ♗f8**

9.a3 e5 Black has retreated his bishop right back, so it does not come under attack, and he has carried out ...e6-e5 without the preliminary exchange on c4. **10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12.0-0-0 ♘b6 13.♘e4 ♘xf3 14.gxf3 ♕h4** with a double-edged position, Nakamura-Kramnik, London 2009;

E) The move **7...♗d7** is examined later in the game Jovanic-Morozevich;

F) The move **7...dxc4** is examined later in the game Ponomariov-Kramnik.

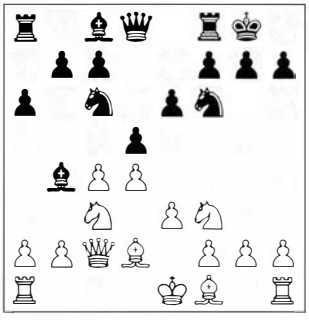
Back to the game.



8.♕c2

The queen leaves the square a4, so as not to be attacked later by ...b7-b5 or come under the x-ray of a bishop on d7.

In reply to **8.a3** the simplest for Black is to exchange two pairs of minor pieces: **8...♗xc3** 8...♗d6?! 9.c5 ♗e7 10.♗d3 e5 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘d7 13.♘xd5 (13.♕c2 ♘xe5 14.♗xh7+ ♔h8 15.♗f5 ♗xc5 16.0-0-0 c6 17.♗xc8 ♖xc8 18.♔b1 b5⇄ Azmaiparashvili-Alexandrov, Bled 2002) 13...♘xe5 (13...♘xc5 14.♕d4 ♘xd3+ 15.♕xd3 ♗e6 16.e4±) 14.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 15.♗c2 ♘d7 16.c6 ♘c5 17.♕f4 bxc6 18.♗c3 ♗e6 19.♕d4 ♕g5 20.h4 ♕xg2 21.0-0-0, and Black resigned, M. Gurevich-Dizdar, Dresden 2007; worth consideration is 8...♗e7 9.♕c2 dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♗d6. **9.♗xc3 ♘e4 10.♕c2 ♘xc3 11.♕xc3 ♖e8** 11...♘e7 12.♗d3 ♗d7 13.0-0 dxc4 14.♗xc4 ♘f5 15.♖fc1 ♘d6 16.♕d3 ♘xc4 17.♕xc4 c6 18.♕b3± Agrest-Izoria, Bastia 2005. **12.♖d1 ♗d7 13.♗d3** Worth consideration is 13.c5!? ♘e7 14.♕b3, preventing the exchange of light-squared bishops. **13...dxc4 14.♗xc4 ♘e7 15.e4 ♗b5 16.b3 ♕d6 17.a4 ♗xc4 18.bxc4 c5 19.0-0 cxd4 20.♖xd4 ♕c7 21.♖fd1** draw, Krasenkow-Kortchnoi, Batumi 1999.



8...dxc4

A) If he wishes, Black can continue to fight for the tempo: **8...♗d6** 9.c5 ♗e7 10.a3 e5 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘g4 13.♗d3 g6 14.♘e2 ♘xe5 15.b4 ♗d7 16.♗c3 ♗a4! 17.♕d2 ♗f6⇄ Leitao-Vescovi, Sao Paulo 2006;

B) Lipnitsky's recommendation **8...♕e7** has not attracted the sympathies of a wide public, but is sometimes played: 9.a3 ♗xc3 10.♗xc3 ♘e4 11.♗d3 ♘xc3 (11...f5 12.0-0 ♗d7 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♕b3 ♕d6 15.♘e5±) 12.♕xc3 dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♖e8 14.♖d1 b6 15.0-0 ♗b7 16.e4 ♘a7 17.♖fe1 ♘b5 18.♕b3 ♘d6 19.♗d3± Krasenkow-V.Filippov, Batumi 1999;

C) **8...♖e8** 9.a3 ♗d6 10.h3 h6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♗d3 ♗d7 13.b4 ♘a7 14.♘a4 b6 15.♘c3 ♘b5 16.♘e2 ♘e4 17.a4 ♘a7 18.0-0 (18.♗xa6? ♘c6 19.b5 ♘xd2 20.♕xd2 ♘b4∓) 18...♘c6 19.b5 axb5 20.axb5 ♘xd2 21.♕xd2 ♘b4⇄ Laznicka-Mamedyarov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

9.♗xc4 ♗d6

'After kingside castling by White, Black will carry out the advance ...e6-e5, whereas if White castles long, there will follow ...b7-b5' – Lipnitsky.

10.a3

A) **10.♘e4** ♘b4 11.♕b1 ♘xe4 12.♕xe4 ♗d7 13.0-0 (13.♘e5 ♗b5 14.a3, Lenic-Dizdar, Murska Sobota 2008, 14...♘d5 15.0-0 c5⇄) 13...♗c6 14.♕g4 ♘d5 15.♘e5 ♗xe5 16.dxe5 ♘b6 17.♗b4 h5 18.♕xh5 ♘xc4 19.♖fd1 ♕e8 20.♖d4, Krasenkow-Kortchnoi, Essen 2002, 20...♘b6 21.♗xf8 g6! 22.♕g5 ♕xf8 23.♖ad1 ♖e8⇄;

B) **10.♘g5** h6 (10...b5 11.♗e2 ♘b4 12.♕b1 ♗b7 13.a3 ♘bd5⇄) 11.♘ge4 ♘xe4 12.♘xe4 ♗e7 13.♖d1 ♔h8 14.0-0 ♕e8 15.f4 ♗d7 16.a3 ♖d8 17.b4± Mirzoev-Tsatsalashvili, Balaguer 2008;

C) **10.0-0**:



Analysis diagram

C1) **10...b5** looks quite risky, although it is probably possible: **11.♗e2 ♗b7 12.♘e4** 12.a4 b4 13.♘e4 ♘xe4 14.♕xe4 ♘a5 15.♕g4 f5 16.♕h3 h6 17.♖ad1 ♕e7 18.♘e5 ♗xe5 19.dxe5 ♖ad8∓ V. Georgiev-Milov, Geneva 2004. **12...♘xe4 13.♕xe4 ♖b8** 13...♘a5!? 14.♕c2 ♘c4!?⇄, and White cannot win a pawn: 15.♗xc4 ♗xf3 16.gxf3 ♕h4 17.f4 ♕g4+ 18.♔h1 ♕f3+ with perpetual check. **14.♕c2 ♔h8 15.♗d3 e5** (Sakaev-Vitiugov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007) **16.♗e4! ♕e8 17.♖ac1 ♘d8 18.dxe5 ♗xe5 19.♘xe5 ♕xe5 20.♗f5 ♘e6 21.♗c3 ♕d5 22.f3±**;

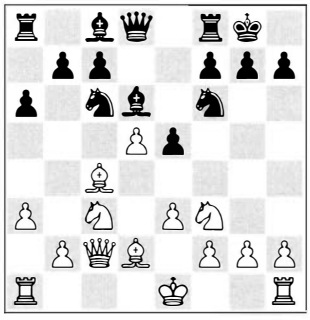
C2) More solid is the move **10...e5**, e.g. **11.dxe5** 11.d5 ♘e7 12.e4 ♘g6 13.♖fe1 h6 14.♗f1 ♘h5 15.♗e3 ♘hf4 16.♘d2 ♕f6 17.f3 b5⇄ Borges Mateos-Gongora Reyes, Havana 2003. **11...♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5 13.f4 ♗d6 14.♗d3 ♔h8 15.♔h1 b5 16.♘e4 ♗f5 17.♘xf6 ♗xd3 18.♕xd3 ♕xf6 19.♗c3 ♕e6 20.e4 f6 21.b3** with a draw in Radjabov-Kramnik, Dortmund 2003.

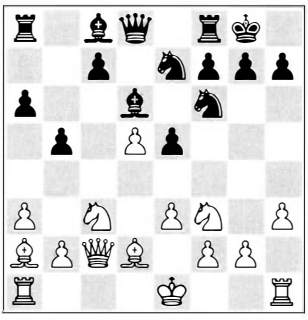
10...e5!

'It is clear that after the advance of Black's central pawn to e5, White faces the problem of how to clarify the situation in the centre. He has to choose between exchanging on e5, retaining the tension or advancing d4-d5' – Lipnitsky.

A double-edged position, not unfavourable to Black, arises after **11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5 13.f4 ♗d6 14.e4 ♘g4**.

11.d5





11...♘e7 12.h3

'A loss of time. He should castle kingside or else play 12.♖d1, or 12.e4. Now Black seizes the initiative on the queenside' – Lipnitsky.

12.e4 c6 13.dxc6 ♘xc6 14.♗g5 h6 15.♗h4 ♗g4⇄ Miladinovic-Gyimesi, Rogaska Slatina 2009.

12...b5

Thus, Black justifies the move 7...a6 – he begins an attack on the queenside, the aim of which consists in weakening his opponent's influence in the centre.

13.♗a2

'The white bishop drops back to a2 not only because of the need to defend the d5 pawn, but also to keep the black pawn back on c7, since if it advances, then after d5xc6 the bishop would be very powerful on the a2-g8 diagonal... Black has completed his opening set-up, whilst White is behind in development (as a result of the manoeuvre ♕d1-a4-c2 and the unnecessary moves a3 and h3). So as to castle and defend the d5 pawn with his e-pawn, White needs a further two moves. Ragozin uses this time to seize the initiative immediately' – Lipnitsky.

13...♕d7!

'The start of an interesting and highly original plan of attack on the white position, the point of which becomes clear within a few moves' – Lipnitsky.

Here is an example from our time: **13...♗b7** 14.e4 ♕e8 15.♖d1 ♔h8 16.♗g5 ♘h5 17.0-0 f6 18.♗e3 g5 19.♘e2 ♗c8 20.♘h2 ♘f4⇄ Papin-Sulashvili, Lvov 2008.

14.e4

White reinforces the d5 pawn, and Black redirects his attention at the e4 pawn.

14...a5 15.0-0

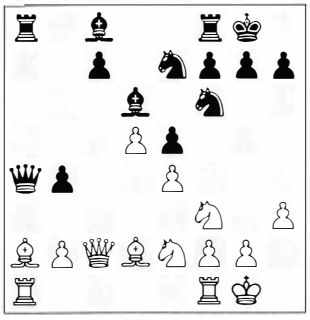
'Finally White castles, but Black's attack is underway. However, White could not have prevented the move ...b5-b4' – Lipnitsky.

15...b4 16.axb4 axb4 17.♘e2

'At first glance, it may seem that White has avoided any trouble. After 17...♗a6 there follows not 18.♗e3 ♘xe4!, but 18.♗c4! But after the reply…

17...♕a4!

The strategic point of Black's play is fully revealed.



After the exchange of queens, White cannot avoid loss of material; it is hard for him simultaneously to meet the pressure on the a-file and the threat of ♘xe4... The move 18.b3, instead of the exchange of queens, is also unattractive. Reshevsky chooses the only decent defence' – Lipnitsky.

18.♗b3

Let us try to support these conclusions with some concrete variations:

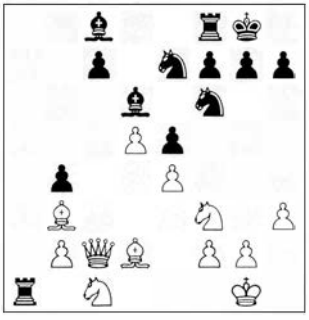
A) **18.♕xa4** ♖xa4 19.♘g3 ♗xh3! (19...♗a6? 20.♗b3!, and White emerges unscathed) 20.gxh3 ♖fa8 with a clear advantage to Black;

B) **18.b3** ♕b5 19.♗g5 ♘d7 20.♘g3 f6 21.♗e3 f5 22.♘xf5 ♘xf5 23.exf5 ♘f6∓. The bishop on a2 looks like a large pawn and it is hard for White to untangle. From the computer's point of view, 18.b3 is the most tenacious line, but a human player would only agree to shut his bishop in like that if held at gunpoint!

18...♕xa1 19.♖xa1 ♖xa1+ 20.♘c1

'Now we see what Black has achieved with his plan, begun with 13...♕d7!. Although material is equal, Black has a positional advantage. It is hard for White to use the strength of his queen or to obtain any active piece play. His only remaining plan is to attack the weak pawn on b4. To prevent this, Ragozin regroups his pieces, with the aim of attacking the white king' – Lipnitsky.

After **20.♔h2** there would have followed 20...♘xe4! 21.♕xe4 ♗f5 22.♕e3 e4+ 23.♘g3 exf3 24.♕xf3 ♖b1∓.



20...h6

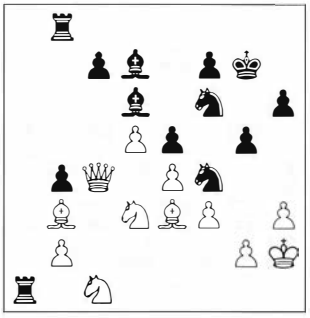
Perfectly possible was **20...♗b7** 21.♗c4 (21.♗g5 ♖c8) 21...c6 and Black is also clearly better. However, Ragozin's desire to restrict the activity of the enemy pieces is perfectly understandable.

21.♘e1 ♗d7 22.♕d3 ♖b8 23.♗e3 ♘g6 24.♔h2 ♘f4 25.♕c4 g5 26.f3 ♔g7

'In the attack on the queenside, every tempo is vital in determining the result. Now however, Black can prepare his kingside attack methodically without hurrying – it is hard for White to undertake anything' – Lipnitsky.

27.♘ed3?!

'This allows Black to open lines more rapidly, but is hard to know what to advise White' – Lipnitsky.



27...♘4xd5

It was better to execute this idea in a different form: 27...♗b5! 28.♕c2 ♘6xd5!

28.exd5?

Stronger was 28.♗c5!, so as to try to create entry squares for the rook on the c-file. For example, 28...♗b5 29.♕c2 ♘f4 30.♘xf4 exf4 31.♗d4, and the struggle becomes much sharper.

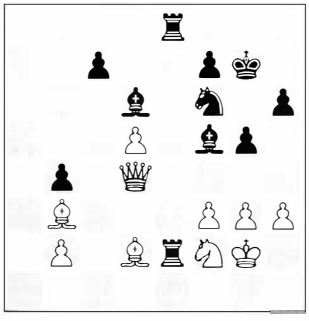
28...e4+ 29.g3 exd3 30.♘xd3 ♖e8 31.♕d4 ♗f5

Black wants to trade off the knight on d3, and then play ...♖e1 and break through along the e-file to the second rank.

32.♘f2 ♖e1 33.♗d2 ♖1e2

A quicker win was 33...♖b1! 34.♗e3 ♗e5 35.♕xb4 ♖xb2 with decisive threats.

34.♔g2



34...♗c5

Little Rybka finds a remarkably beautiful winning line: 34...♖8e5 35.♔f1 c5! The queen in the centre of the board. does not have a single retreat square! He must take en passant: 36.dxc6, after which there follows the fatal blow 36...♖xf2+! 37.♕xf2 (37.♔xf2 ♗c5) 37...♗xh3+ 38.♔g1 ♗c5.

35.♕xc5 ♖xd2 36.♗c4

'Meeting the threat of 36...♖ee2, but losing a pawn. However, Reshevsky had already resigned himself to defeat, because only a miracle can save him' – Lipnitsky.

36...♖xb2?

'The miracle occurs! Black commits a sad error, which costs him a well-deserved victory' – Lipnitsky.

Lipnitsky recommends 36...♘xd5 37.♗xd5 ♖ee2, but after 38.g4 ♗g6 39.♗c4 ♖xf2+ 40.♕xf2 ♖xf2+ 41.♔xf2 ♔f6 Black still has some work to do, to realise the extra pawn.

The computer's winning line is long and hard to calculate: 36...♖e1 37.d6 cxd6 38.♕xf5 ♖c1 39.♗b3 ♖xb2 40.h4 gxh4 41.♕f4 ♖c3 42.♗d1 ♖d3 43.♔g1 ♖dd2 44.gxh4 ♖xf2 45.♕g3+ ♔h7 46.♕xf2 ♖xf2 47.♔xf2 ♔g7. Of course, it is easier to realise two pawns than one, but here too, White can still resist. In general, it is hard to believe that such a fighter as Reshevsky, in such a sharp position, would have 'resigned himself to defeat'; he stubbornly fights on, and as a result, Ragozin overlooks a hidden defensive resource for White.

37.d6!

Here it is – both the bishop on f5 and the pawn on c7 are hanging.

37...♗c8 38.♕xc7?

Probably the players were both in time-trouble. Correct was 38.dxc7, and after 38...♖c2 39.♕xb4 ♗e6 40.♗d3 ♖xc7 Black has only a minimal advantage.



38...♗e6?

In essence, this blunders a piece; yes, Black breaks through to the second rank, but he has to give up a knight for the d6 pawn. He should have blockaded the passed pawn with 38...♗d7, e.g.: 39.♕c5 ♖e1 40.♕d4 ♖eb1. Here the game would have been adjourned, and on resumption, Black would probably have demonstrated an accurate path to a win.

39.♗xe6 ♖xe6 40.d7 ♘xd7 41.♕xd7 ♖ee2 42.♔g1 ♖xf2 43.♕d4+

Black cannot avoid perpetual check, as he has no hiding place on either wing. Ragozin runs his king around the board for another 20 moves, before agreeing the draw.

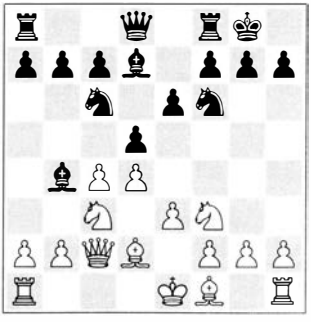
43...♔g6 44.♕e4+ ♔f6 45.♕d4+ ♔e6 46.♕e4+ ♔d6 47.♕d4+ ♔c6 48.♕c4+ ♔b6 49.♕d4+ ♔b5 50.♕d5+ ♔a4 51.♕a8+ ♔b3 52.♕d5+ ♔c3 53.♕e5+ ♔c4 54.♕e4+ ♔c5 55.♕e5+ ♔c6 56.♕e4+ ♔b6 57.♕d4+ ♔a5 58.♕d5+ ♔a4 59.♕a8+ ♔b3 60.♕d5+ ♔c3 61.♕e5+ ♔d3 62.♕e4+

Draw.

'Despite the mistakes, this game was a splendid creative achievement by Ragozin' – Lipnitsky.

Game 18
Jovanic,Ognjen
Morozevich,Alexander
Zurich 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.e3 0-0 7.♗d2 ♗d7 8.♕c2



8...♖e8

'A bad move, weakening the square f7. The point is that a later ...e6-e5 will involve playing ...d5xc4, bringing the white bishop to attack the weak square f7. In addition, White also threatens to bring his knight to g5 with attacks on the squares f7 and h7. Ragozin suggests 8...h6 here. However, in this case, by castling queenside, White obtains a

much more promising attacking position. The most subtle move seems to me to be 8...♕e7' – Lipnitsky.

In this game, the weakness of f7 certainly tells, however, I would not criticise Black's last move just because of that, if only because Kramnik quite recently played the plan with ...♖e8, ...♗f8 and ...e6-e5 against Nakamura. Black's mistake in the present game came later.

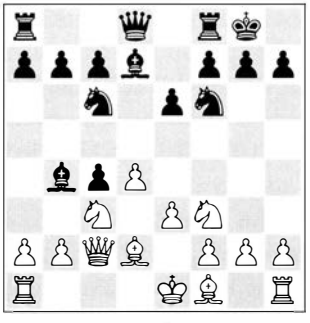
The examples given below show that Black has other promising continuations, especially 8...a6 and 8...dxc4:

A) **8...♕e7** 9.a3 ♗xc3 10.♗xc3 ♘e4 11.♗d3 ♘xc3 12.♕xc3 a5 13.b3 ♖fc8 14.0-0 ♗e8 15.♖fe1 ♕d6 16.c5± draw, Babula-Laznicka, Pardubice 2007;

B) **8...h6** 9.♖d1 (according to my database, nobody has tried Lipnitsky's suggestion of 9.0-0-0) 9...♕e7 10.a3 ♗xc3 11.♗xc3 a6 12.♗d3 dxc4 13.♗xc4 b5 14.♗e2 b4 15.axb4 ♘xb4 16.♕b1 ♖fb8 17.0-0 ♘bd5 18.♗d2 ♗b5 19.♗xb5 ♖xb5 20.e4 ♘b6 21.b4± Gagunashvili-Tsereteli, Istanbul 2008;

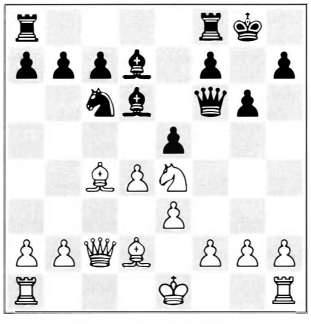
C) **8...a6** 9.a3 ♗d6 10.c5 ♗e7 11.b4 ♘a7 12.a4 b6 13.♘a2 b5 14.a5 ♘e4 15.♘c1 ♘c6 16.♘d3 ♗e8 17.0-0-0 f5∞ Jovanic-Vl. Kovacevic, Solin 2005;

D) **8...dxc4**



Analysis diagram

'Black directly carries out his plan of advancing ...e6-e5, without waiting for White to place his rook on d1' – Lipnitsky. **9.♗xc4 ♗d6 10.♘g5** It seems that this manoeuvre was invented by Eliskases. In anticipation of the move ...e6-e5, White creates pressure against the squares f7 and h7, whilst if Black attacks the knight, then it occupies the excellent central square e4. The other knight jump 10.♘b5 also deserves consideration, so as to exchange the dark-squared bishop come what may, e.g. 10...a6 11.♘xd6 cxd6 12.♖c1 ♖c8 13.♕b1 ♘e7 14.b3 ♕b6 15.0-0 d5 16.♗d3 ♗b5 17.♘e5 ♖xc1 18.♖xc1 ♗xd3 19.♕xd3 ♖c8 20.♖xc8+ ♘xc8 21.♕c2 ♘a7 22.f3± Mirzoev-Cruz, Elgoibar 2008. **10...e5** 'Averbakh does not allow himself to be intimidated and carries on with his plan. Weakening the kingside with 10...h6 would not be good, not so much because of the dubious attack 11.h4, as the simple 11.♘ge4' – Lipnitsky. Also interesting is 10...♘b4!? 11.♕b1 h6 12.♘ge4 ♘bd5 13.0-0 ♖c8⇄. **11.♘d5 g6** The only defence, but adequate. **12.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 13.♘e4**



Analysis diagram

'The knight occupies a strong position in the centre of the board. Utilising its dominating position, White is ready to suppress his opponent's counterplay and

strengthen his position further' – Lipnitsky. **13...♕h4** Not 13...♕f5?! because of 14.d5! ♘b4 15.♕b1 b5 16.♗b3 a5 (Eliskases-Averbakh, Saltsjöbaden 1952) 17.h3 h5 18.♖g1±, and the black queen is very uncomfortable on f5. **14.g3** The queen must be driven from her active position, so as to stop Black taking the initiative. **14...♕e7 15.d5** 'After 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 the open lines would only be to Black's benefit, since he is first to complete his development' – Lipnitsky. **15...♘b4 16.♕b3 a5 17.♘xd6** 17.0-0 b5 18.♘xd6 (Lauer-Merker, corr GDR 1982) 18...♕xd6 19.♗xb4 axb4 20.♗e2 ♖a6⇄. **17...♕xd6 18.a3 ♘a6⇄**



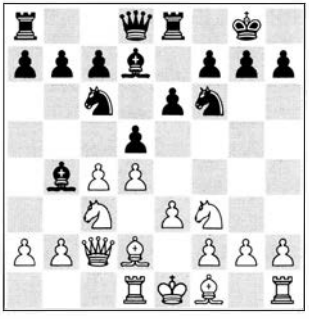
Analysis diagram

In this tense position, Black has good counterplay. Taking the a5 pawn is risky: 19.♗xa5?! b5! 20.♗e2 ♘c5 21.♕c3 (21.♗b4? ♘xb3−+) 21...♖xa5! 22.♕xa5 ♘b3 23.♕c3 ♘xa1 24.0-0 b4 25.axb4 ♖a8. It is hard for the knight to come out of a1, but also not easy for White to win it. For example, after the direct 26.b3? there follows 26...♖a2!, and the knight escapes via c2.

9.♖d1

White understands that his opponent's plan involves the break ...e6-e5 after the preliminary exchange on c4 and bishop retreat to d6, so he places his rook on the same line as the enemy queen, slightly hampering Black from carrying out this plan.

The following example shows that preventing ...e6-e5 is practically impossible: **9.a3 ♗f8** Obviously, after 9...♗d6 Black was afraid of the tempo-gaining 10.c5 followed by b2-b4. **10.♗d3 g6 11.0-0 ♗g7 12.b4 a6 13.♖ad1 ♕e7 14.h3 dxc4 15.♗xc4 e5⇄** Leitao-Lopez Martinez, Barcelona 2006. The dark-squared bishop is excellently-placed on g7 instead of d6, its usual square in this variation. Black is not afraid of d4-d5, since his knight retreats to a7, and next move comes back out to b5 (or it may go via c8 to the blockade square d6, which is also not bad).



9...a6

The alternative is **9...♗d6**. 'This retreat looks more natural after the preliminary exchange on c4, but Black does not wish to give his opponent a tempo to develop his king's bishop' – Lipnitsky. **10.♗c1** 'The dreaded battle for the tempo continues. At the same time, White opens the d-file for his rook. Interesting problems are posed here by the move 10.c5, which gives the game a different picture. It is the desire to avoid this which explains why

Black usually exchanges on c4, before retreating his bishop to d6. However, he hardly need fear the cramped position after 10.c5' – Lipnitsky. Certainly, after 10.c5 ♗f8 11.♗b5 (or 11.♗e2 e5) 11...♘b4! 12.♕b3 ♗xb5 13.♘xb5 ♘c6 Black quickly gets in ...e6-e5 and obtains satisfactory play. **10...a5** 'The unwillingness to present White with a tempo for his king's bishop's development leads Black to delay carrying out his plan, but this backfires. Ragozin recommends that he just go ahead and play 10...dxc4 11.♗xc4 e5' – Lipnitsky. **11.a3 a4?** The pawn is now cut off from its colleagues and White starts to attack it. He should defend the g5-square with the move 11...h6 and then just get on with his basic plan of ...e6-e5. **12.c5 ♗f8 13.♗b5 ♘e4 14.♘xe4 dxe4 15.♕xe4 ♖a5 16.♗d3±** Eliskases-Ragozin, Moscow 1936.

10.♗e2

White does have many useful waiting moves left, but he could have remembered his rook's pawns:

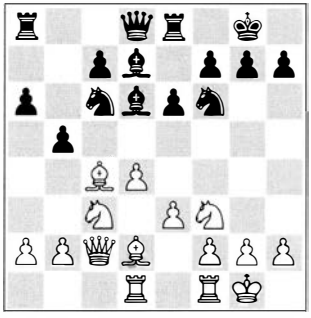
A) **10.h3** dxc4 11.♗xc4 b5 12.♗b3 ♗d6 13.♘e4 ♘b4 14.♗xb4 ♗xb4+ 15.♔e2 ♘xe4 16.♕xe4 (Malakhatko-T.Vasilevich, Korinthos 2002) 16...a5!?⇄;

B) **10.a3** ♗d6 11.♗d3 (Black has already played ...a7-a6, and so the plan of taking queenside space is not so dangerous: 11.c5 ♗f8 12.b4 e5⇄) 11...dxc4 12.♗xc4 b5 13.♗d3 e5 14.♘e4 exd4 draw, Krasenkow-Ponomariov, Sestao 2010.

10...dxc4

With the bishop on d7, what we might call the 'Kramnik plan' with the bishop retreat to f8, followed by ...e6-e5, does not work, because the d5 pawn needs additional defence. But the classical Ragozin plan is perfectly good here.

11.♗xc4 ♗d6 12.0-0 b5?!



In the set-up which Black has planned, this weakness can play an important role. He should play **12...h6** at once, because now after **13.♘e4 ♘xe4 14.♕xe4 e5** White does not have the move 15.♕d5? because of 15...♗e6 (the knight on c6 is defended), whilst the continuation **15.dxe5** ♘xe5 16.♘xe5 ♗xe5 17.♕xb7 ♗xh2+ 18.♔xh2 ♕h4+ 19.♔g1 ♕xc4 leads to equality.

13.♗b3 h6

It is important to protect the g5-square, so that ...e6-e5 does not run into the reply ♘f3-g5.

14.♘e4!

Excellently played – the threat of ♘c5 practically forces Black to exchange knights, after which the centralised white queen will be very strong.

14...♘xe4

Black can try to develop an initiative on the queenside: **14...a5** 15.a3 a4 16.♗a2 ♘xe4 17.♕xe4 b4!?, but then the reply 18.♘e5! is rather unpleasant. Here the piece sacrifice 18...bxa3 19.♘xc6 ♗xc6 20.♕xc6 axb2 is worth considering, al-

though in the final position, Black does not have sufficient compensation, in my opinion.

15.♕xe4 e5

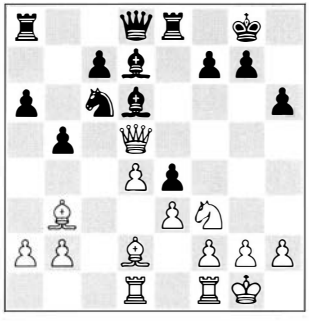
After 15...a5 16.♗c2 f5 17.♕d3± White will be able gradually to exploit the many weaknesses in his opponent's position.

16.♕d5!

Now we see the problem with the move ...b7-b5 – Black does not have 16...♗e6 because of the loss of his knight on c6.

16...e4

Black sacrifices a pawn, to cramp his opponent's forces. On 16...♖e7 there is the unpleasant 17.♘xe5 ♘xe5 18.dxe5 ♗xe5 19.♗b4.



17.♕xf7+?!

White misses a beautiful resource: 17.♘g5!! ♗e6 (the white knight is attacked twice, but it cannot be taken: 17...hxg5 18.♕xf7+ ♔h7 19.♕h5#; 17...♕xg5 18.♕xf7+ ♔h8 19.♕xd7±) 18.♘xe6 ♖xe6 19.♕h5 (19.♕xc6?? ♗xh2+) 19...♖e7 (19...♖f6 20.f3! with very strong pressure in the centre) 20.♗d5, and White wins the exchange.

17...♔h8 18.♘e5?

White voluntarily returns the pawn and goes over to the defence. Stronger was 18.♘e1 ♗g4 19.♖c1 ♘e7 20.♗c2±.

18...♗xe5

Surely White was not counting on 18...♘xe5? 19.dxe5 ♖e7 (19...♗xe5 20.♗b4) 20.♕g6 ♖xe5 21.♗c3±.
Black could have forced a draw: 18...♖xe5 19.dxe5 ♘xe5 20.♕d5 (20.♕h5? ♗g4) 20...♗c6 21.♕e6 (21.♕d4? ♘f3+ 22.gxf3 ♕g5+ 23.♔h1 ♕h5 24.f4 ♗xf4 25.exf4 ♕f3+ 26.♔g1 e3–+) 21...♗d7 22.♕d5 ♗c6. But he did not wish to.

19.dxe5 ♘xe5 20.♕f4 ♘d3 21.♕g3 b4!

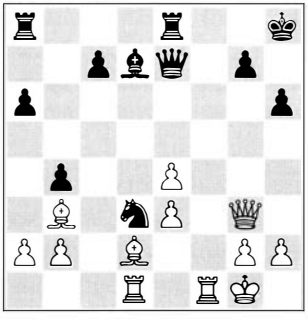
Starting a plan to restrict the white dark-squared bishop.

22.f3 ♕e7?

Allowing White to break the siege. Correct was 22...♘xb2 23.♖b1 ♘d3 24.♗d5 exf3 25.♖xf3 ♘e5 with a double-edged game.

23.fxe4

Perhaps White did not notice that at the end of the more or less forced variation 23.♗d5! exf3 24.♗xa8 f2+ 25.♖xf2! ♘xf2 26.♕xf2 ♖xa8 he has the blow 27.♗xb4! winning a pawn.



23...♗e6!

Now the light-squared bishops will be exchanged, but the dark-squared bishop continues to play an unenviable role.

24.♗xe6 ♕xe6 25.♕xc7

Even so, the bishop could have broken out! After 25.a3 a5 White can exploit the undefended knight on d3: 26.♗xb4! ♘xb4 27.axb4 axb4 28.♕xc7 ♕b3!?∞ Black has the initiative, but White has two extra pawns.

25...♕xa2 26.♕c2 ♖ed8 27.♖a1?

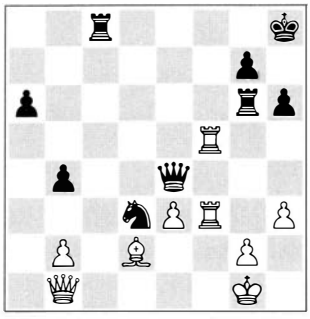
It is only after this pointless move, allowing Black to calmly regroup his pieces, that White starts to experience real problems. A roughly equal position arises after 27.♗e1 ♖ac8 28.♕e2 ♘xe1 29.♖fxe1.

27...♕e6 28.♖a5 ♖ac8 29.♕b1 ♕xe4 30.h3

On 30.♖xa6 the reply 30...b3!, with the threat of ...♖c2, is extremely unpleasant. White cannot prevent the rook's entry to the 2nd rank by purely mechanical means: 31.♗c3 ♕xe3+ 32.♔h1 ♖xc3! 33.bxc3 ♘f2+ 34.♖xf2 (otherwise it is smothered mate) 34...♕xf2 35.♖e6 (35.h3 ♕c2 36.♖a1 b2!) 35...♕c2 36.♖e1 ♕xc3, and the passed pawn on h3 should bring Black a quick win.

30...♖d6 31.♖af5 ♖g6 32.♖1f3

Allowing a beautiful combinational finish. However, it is already hard to give White any good advice.

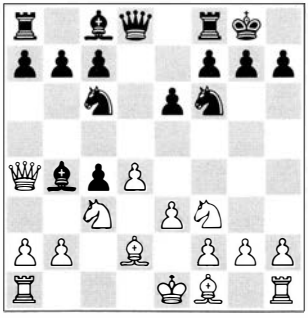


32...♖xg2+! 33.♔xg2 ♘f4+ 34.♖xf4 ♕xb1 35.♖xb4 a5 36.♖b6 ♕e4 37.♔g3 ♕e5+ 38.♔g2 ♖c2 0-1

Game 19
Ponomariov,Ruslan
Kramnik,Vladimir
Wijk aan Zee 2011

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.e3 0-0 7.♗d2 dxc4

Nowadays the most popular move, although admittedly, Ragozin's 7...a6 is only marginally less popular. Without beating about the bush, Black carries out his basic plan: to put the bishop on d6 and play ...e6-e5. He is not bothered about the possible exchange of the dark-squared bishop for the knight, so he does not waste a tempo playing ...a7-a6.



8.♗xc4 ♗d6

After **8...a6 9.♕c2** we reach a position seen in the game Reshevsky-Ragozin.

9.♘b5

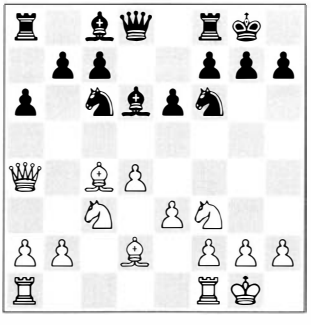
The principled move. White wants to obtain the advantage of the two bishops. Other alternatives:

A) **9.♖d1** e5 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.♘e2 ♕e7 13.♗c3 ♗g4 14.♗xe5 ♕xe5 15.0-0 a6⇄ Volkov-Moiseenko, Sochi 2007;

B) **9.0-0**:

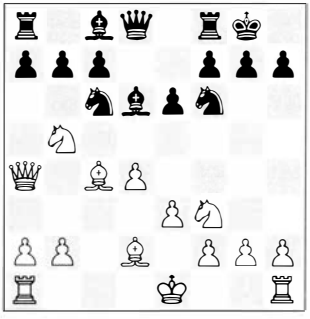
B1) **9...e5 10.d5** 10.h3 ♗f5 11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5 13.♖ad1 c6 14.e4 ♗g6 15.♗f4 ♕c7 16.♗xe5 ♕xe5 Martinovic-Palac, Zagreb 2008; 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.♕c2 ♕e7 13.f4 ♗xc3 14.♗xc3 ♖d8 15.f5 b6 16.♖f3 ♗b7 17.♖g3 ♔h8∞ Jankovic-B. Kovacevic, Solin 2005. **10...e4!?** Leading to interesting complications; the quieter 10...♘e7 11.e4 ♘g6 12.♖fe1 a6 13.♕d1 h6 14.♗f1 ♗d7 15.♕b3 ♖b8⇄ (Onischuk-Halkias, Dresden 2008) is also possible. **11.♘xe4 ♘xe4 12.dxc6 ♘xd2 13.♘xd2 ♗xh2+ 14.♔xh2 ♕xd2 15.♖ad1 ♕xb2 16.♖d4⩲** Danielian-T.Kosintseva, Ningbo 2009;

B2) It was also possible to play **9...a6** after all.



Analysis diagram

Now after 10.♕c2 we reach a position looked at in the note to White's 10th move in Reshevsky-Ragozin (see 10.0-0 etc.). But the move ...b7-b5 is not a threat all the while the rook on a8 is undefended, so White need not spend a tempo retreating his queen, but can instead play some other useful move. For example, **10.♖fd1** 10.h3 e5 11.d5 ♘e7 12.♕c2 h6 13.a4 ♘g6 14.♗d3 ♘h7 15.♗xg6 fxg6 16.♘h2 ♗f5 draw, Leitao-Saldano Dayer, Campinas 2010; 10.♖fe1 e5 11.d5 e4 (11...♘e7!? 12.e4 c6⇄) 12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.dxc6 ♘xd2 14.♘xd2 ♗xh2+ 15.♔xh2 ♕xd2 16.cxb7 ♗xb7 17.♔g1 ♖ab8⇄ Lenic-Moiseenko, Moscow 2010. **10...e5 11.d5** 11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5 13.♗e1 ♕e7 14.♕c2 draw, Giorgadze-Arutinian, Tbilisi 2007. **11...♘e7 12.e4 ♘g6 13.♖e1 ♕e7 14.♗f1 ♗g4 15.♕d1 ♘h4 16.♗e2 ♘xf3+ 17.♗xf3 ♗d7 18.♖c1 h6 19.a3 c6⇄** Polak-Miton, Prievidza 2009.



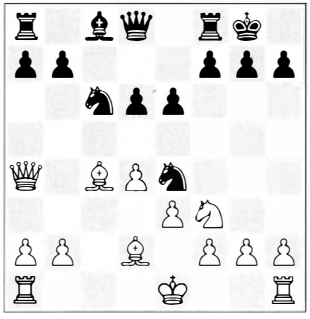
9...♗d7!?

A novelty from Kramnik: the exchange on d6 does not bother him at all, and he just continues to develop his pieces.

It was also possible to move the bishop away with **9...♗e7**, when after 10.0-0 a6 11.♘c3 ♗d6 we reach a position, examined in the note to White's 9th move (after 9.0-0 a6).

The hasty **9...e5** allows White to obtain a comfortable position after 10.♘xd6 (weaker is 10.dxe5?! ♗xe5 11.♗b4 ♘xb4 12.♕xb4 c5 13.♕xc5 ♗xb2 14.♖b1 ♕a5+ 15.♔e2 ♘e4 16.♕d5 ♘c3+ 17.♘xc3 ♕xc3⇄ Shariyazdanov-Dizdar, Dubai 2001) 10...♕xd6 11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♕xe5 13.♗c3 ♕g5 14.0-0-0 ♗f5 15.h4 ♕g6 16.f3± Kempinski-Milov, Linares 2001.

After **9...♘e4** 10.♘xd6 cxd6 two grandmaster games resulted in an almost identical endgame, with a small advantage for White:



Analysis diagram

A) **11.♕c2** ♘xd2 12.♕xd2 d5 13.♗d3 ♗d7 14.0-0 ♕a5 15.♕xa5 ♘xa5 16.♘e5± Akobian-Kritz, Lubbock 2008;

B) **11.♗d3** ♘xd2 12.♘xd2 ♗d7 13.♕a3 ♕e7 14.♘e4 d5 15.♕xe7 ♘xe7 16.♘c5± Krasenkow-Emelin, Warsaw 2009.

10.♕b3

Little is promised by 10.♘xd6 cxd6 (complications such as 10...♘xd4 11.♘xb7 ♗xa4 12.♘xd8 ♘xf3+ 13.gxf3 ♖fxd8 14.b3± are not good for Black) 11.♕a3, because Black has established a symmetrical pawn position in the centre and obtains satisfactory play: 11...d5 12.♗d3 ♘e4 13.0-0 ♖c8 14.♖ac1 f6⇄.

10...♘e4 11.♘xd6 cxd6 12.♗d3 ♘xd2 13.♘xd2 ♕a5 14.a3

The b7 pawn is poisoned: 14.♕xb7? ♘b4 15.♗e4 ♗b5 with a strong initiative for Black.

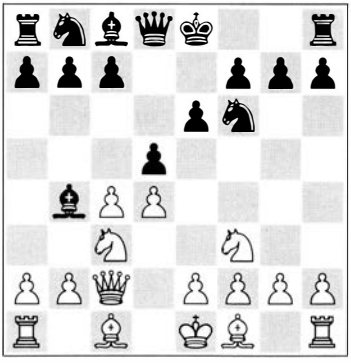
14...♖ab8 15.♕b5

Faced with an opening surprise, White decides to force exchanges and put an early end to the battle.

15...♕xb5 16.♗xb5 ♖fc8 17.♘e4 d5 18.♘c5 ♗e8 19.♗xc6 ♖xc6 ½-½

Chapter Two

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕c2



In practice, this variation of the Ragozin Defence with the queen on c2 usually arises via the Nimzo-Indian Defence with 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2. With the 'direct' Ragozin move-order 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 the move 5.♕c2 is only the eighth(!) most popular, and is much rarer than 5.♕a4+, 5.♗g5, 5.cxd5 or 5.e3. But via the Nimzo-Indian, reaching Ragozin territory requires the cooperation of both players. Thus, after 4.♕c2 d5 White most often exchanges on d5 or plays 5.a3, whereas the move 5.♘f3 is quite rare, mainly because Black has no problems after 5...dxc4.

The other move-order, which allows a transposition from the Nimzo-Indian to this line of the Ragozin, is 4.♕c2 ♘c6. Here the main continuation for White is definitely 5.♘f3, defending the pawn on d4 and not shutting in his dark-squared bishop. Now Black only has to play 5...d5 and lo and behold, we have a Ragozin position! In practice, however, Black is four times more likely to adopt the plan with d6 and e5, because this is considered more reliable.

A characteristic of this line is that play more often transposes into a Queen's Gambit Accepted (for example, index lines D24 or D31 are quite common) than the Nimzo-Indian. We will not go into detail on these other openings, but will concentrate on the basic ideas.

Game 20
Elianov,Pavel
Palac,Mladen
France 2007

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 d5 5.♘f3 dxc4



Black accepts the offer and invites his opponent to reveal his trumps. In compensation, White obtains the initiative in the centre and can undermine his opponent's queenside pawn structure.

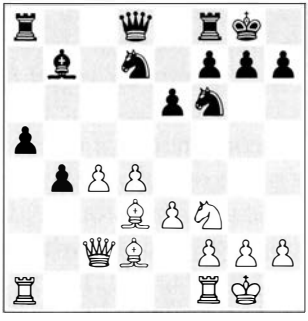
6.a3

Immediately clarifying the intentions of the dark-squared bishop. Let us look at the main alternatives:

A) **6.e3** White strengthens the d4 pawn and continues his development. **6...b5 7.a4 c6**

A1) The exchange on b5 eases Black's position: **8.axb5 cxb5 9.♗d2** 9.b3 is bad because of 9...♘d5 10.♗d2 ♗xc3 11.♗xc3 b4 12.♗d2 c3 13.♗c1 ♗b7∓ Wittstock-Inkiov, Cesenatico 2000. **9...♗xc3** In exchanging bishop for knight, Black wins a tempo for the development of his pieces. After 9...♕b6? 10.b3! White soon wins back the pawn, after which a position arises with mutual chances: 10...♗b7 11.bxc4 bxc4 12.♘a4 ♕d6 13.♘e5=. **10.♕xc3** 10.♗xc3 ♘c6! – the idea of this move is to answer 11.b3 with 11...b4! and move his queenside pawns out from under attack – 11.♘e5 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘d5 13.b3 ♘xc3 14.♕xc3 (Dubinin-Savitsky, Leningrad 1934) 14...a5∓. **10...♘e4 11.♕c2 ♘xd2 12.♘xd2 ♗d7 13.b3 cxb3 14.♘xb3 a5 15.♗d3 ♘a6∓** Degerman-Barkhagen, Sweden 1998/99;

A2) **8.♗d2!** The most unpleasant continuation for Black. **8...a5 9.axb5 ♗xc3 10.♕xc3 cxb5 11.b3** After 11.♖xa5? White loses the queen without sufficient compensation: 11...♘d5 12.♖xa8 (or 12.♕a3 b4 13.♕a4+ ♗d7) 12...♘xc3 13.♖xb8 (Neuman-Ioseliani, Czech Republic 1997/98) 13...♘e4 14.♗b4 f6∓. **11...♗b7 12.bxc4 b4 13.♕c2 0-0 14.♗d3 ♘bd7 15.0-0**



Quite a popular *tabiya*, which appears in theory under the index D31. It is not so easy to set White's central pawns in motion, but they control a great many squares, and because of this, Black's passed pawns remain immobile for a long time. Overall, chances are about equal.

15...♕c7 16.c5 (16.e4?! e5∓ is bad, as breaches appear in White's central pawn phalanx, which can be occupied by the black pieces) 16...♖fb8 17.♖fb1 h6 18.h3 ♗d5⇄ Strizhnev-Gunajew, Logrono 1998.

B) **6.♗g5 b5**



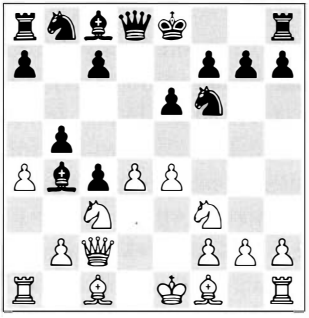
Analysis diagram

Practice shows that the maximum White can count on in this position is equality:

B1) **7.a4 c6 8.g3** 8.e4 h6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 – see 7.e4 h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.a4 c6. It is not possible to exploit the weakness of the long white diagonal: 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6! 9.axb5 cxb5 10.♕e4 ♕f5 (by sacrificing a rook, Black creates a strong counterattack) 11.♕xa8 ♕c2 12.♘d2 (12.♕xb8 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 14.♔d1 ♕xa1+ 15.♔c2 ♕a2+ 16.♔c1 ♕a3+ 17.♔d1 ♕b3+ 18.♔c1 0-0–+; 12.♖d1 ♕xb2 13.♕xb8 ♗xc3+ 14.♘d2 ♗xd2+ 15.♖xd2 ♕b1+ 16.♖d1 ♕b4+ 17.♖d2 0-0∓) 12...♕xb2 13.♖d1 ♗xc3 14.f3 (14.♕xb8 ♗xd2+ etc, as shown above) 14...0-0 15.♕xb8 ♗xd4∓ Lain-Lettieri, Bratto 2005. This idea with the rook sacrifice, and the associated variations, were shown by Alexander Alekhine. **8...♗b7 9.♗g2 h6 10.♗d2 a6 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♖ad1 0-0 13.e4 ♘bd7 14.e5 ♘d5 15.♘xd5 cxd5∓** T.Vasilevich-Madl, Germany Bundesliga W 1999/00;

B2) **7.e4 h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.a4 c6 10.♗e2 ♗b7 11.0-0 a6 12.b3** 12.e5 ♕e7 13.♘e4 ♘d7 14.b3 cxb3 15.♕xb3 0-0 16.♖ab1 a5 17.♘fd2 ♗a6∓ Rej-Xie, Canberra 2006; 12.♘e5 0-0 13.f4 ♘d7 14.♔h1 ♖ad8 15.♘g4 ♕h4 16.f5 h5 17.♘e3 e5∓ Petkov-Kir. Georgiev, Sibenik 2006. **12...cxb3 13.♕xb3 ♗xc3 14.♕xc3 ♘d7 15.♘d2 0-0 16.♘b3 c5!?** The simplest path to exchanges and equality; after 16...♕e7 17.♘a5 ♘f6 18.f3 White has sufficient compensation for the pawn. **17.axb5 axb5 18.♗xb5 cxd4 19.♕xd4** draw, Akesson-Grandelius, Kungsor 2009;

C) **6.e4 b5 7.a4**



Analysis diagram

Quite an important position, which usually arises from the Queen's Gambit Accepted. Here Black has a choice: defend the b5 pawn or attack the white pawn on e4:

C1) **7...c6** 8.♗e2 ♗b7 9.0-0 a6 (Variation D31) 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 ♘bd7 12.e5 g5 13.♗g3 ♘h5 14.b3 ♘xg3 15.hxg3 cxb3 16.♕xb3 ♗e7 17.♘e4 0-0⇄ Stefansson-Fridman, Rijeka 2010;

C2) **7...♗b7** (Variation D24) **8.e5** 8.axb5 ♗xe4 9.♕a4 (Radziewicz-D.Berczes, Budapest 2006) 9...♕e7 10.b6+ ♘bd7 11.bxa7 ♗xf3 12.gxf3 0-0∓. **8...♗e4 9.♕d2**, and here Rybka's interesting gambit idea deserves consideration: **9...♗xf3 10.gxf3 ♘c6!? 11.exf6 ♕xf6 12.♕f4 ♘xd4 13.♕xf6 gxf6⇄**.

Back to the game.

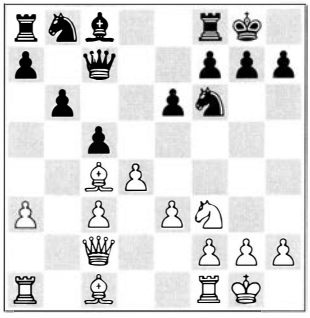


6...♗xc3+

Also good is **6...♗a5**, keeping the bishop and going into practically unexplored territory. Then possible is **7.♕a4+ c6** In my view, the following idea, not yet tested in practice, is in full accord with the spirit of the Ragozin: 7...♘c6!? 8.♕xc4 0-0 9.b4 ♗b6 10.e3 ♖e8 11.♗e2 e5⇄. **8.♕xc4 b5 9.♕d3 b4!? 10.axb4 ♗a6 11.♕c2 ♗xb4** Black has voluntarily broken up his pawn structure on the queenside, but has gained time for development. Later he hopes to play ...c6-c5 and get rid of his weak pawn. **12.e4** He can fight for an advantage after 12.g3 0-0 13.♗g2±. **12...♗xf1 13.♔xf1 ♘bd7 14.g3 h6 15.♔g2 0-0 16.h4 ♕e7 17.♗f4 ♖fc8 18.♖ad1** draw, Shipov-Johannessen, Tromsö 2006.

7.♕xc3

An interesting alternative is **7.bxc3**, reinforcing the pawn centre. Then possible is: **7...c5** After 7...b5 8.a4 c6 9.♗a3 Black defends his pawn, but experiences great difficulties with his development: 9...♘bd7 10.g3 ♗b7 11.♗g2 ♕c7 12.0-0 ♘b6 13.♘e5± P. Dimitrov-Dobrev, Bankja 1991. **8.e3 0-0 9.♗xc4 ♕c7 10.0-0 b6**



Analysis diagram

The position reached is typical of the Nimzo-Indian. Black wishes to exchange light-squared bishops and establish a blockade on the light squares. It is hard for White to prevent this plan; if he takes control of the square a6, then the exchange will be offered on e4 instead. **11.♕e2 ♗b7 12.♗d3** 12.♗b2 ♘bd7 13.♗d3 ♗e4 14.♗xe4 ♘xe4 15.c4 ♖fe8 16.♖fd1 ♖ac8⇄ Gligoric-Hübner, Bugojno 1978. **12...♗e4 13.♗xe4 ♘xe4 14.♕d3 ♕b7 15.c4 ♘d7 16.♗b2 ♘df6 17.♘e5 ♖fd8 18.f3 ♘d6 19.dxc5 bxc5 20.♕c3 ♖ab8 21.♖ab1 ♘f5⇄** I.Sokolov-Wells, London 2008. The battery on the long diagonal looks dangerous, but it is hard to exploit its potential.

7...b5 8.a4 c6 9.g3

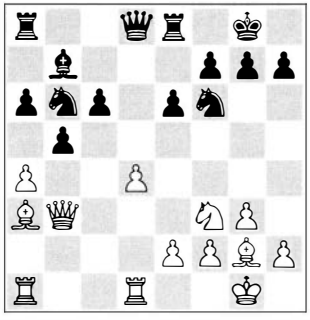
White seeks long-lasting compensation for the pawn and quietly continues with his mobilisation. There is no point in winning back the pawn at once, because White worsens his own position: **9.axb5 cxb5 10.b3 cxb3** In my view, this move is more reliable than 10...♘d5 11.♕a5 ♕xa5+ 12.♖xa5 a6 13.bxc4 ♘c6 14.♖a1 bxc4 15.e4 ♘c3 16.♗xc4 ♘xe4 17.♗a3⩲. **11.e3 ♘bd7 12.♕xb3 a6 13.♗xb5 ♖b8 14.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 15.♕a2 ♗b5 16.♗a3 ♖c8∓**. Both kings are stuck in the centre, but thanks

to his control of the c-file, Black has the initiative.

9...♗b7

It is also worth considering 9...♘d5 10.♕c2 ♘a6 11.♗g2 ♘ab4 12.♕b1 ♕e7⇄.

10.♗g2 ♘bd7 11.0-0 0-0 12.b3 cxb3 13.♗a3 ♖e8 14.♕xb3 a6 15.♖fd1 ♘b6



White has the freer game, and dominates the dark squares, but Black has an extra pawn and a solid position.

16.♗c5

A sharper and more tense position arises after 16.♘e5!? ♘xa4 17.♖ac1 a5 18.♘xc6 ♕b6 19.♖c2∞.

16...♕c7

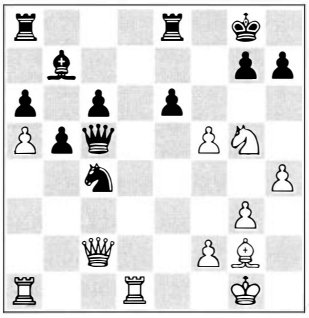
With his last move, White indirectly defended the a4 pawn: 16...♘xa4? 17.♖xa4 bxa4 18.♕xb7.

17.a5 ♘c4 18.♕c2 ♘d7 19.♘g5

The bishop on b7 is buried, but how can we exploit this? Elianov creates threats on the kingside.

19...f5 20.e4 ♘xc5 21.dxc5 ♕e7 22.h4 ♕xc5 23.exf5

Here the players agreed a draw, probably at White's suggestion.

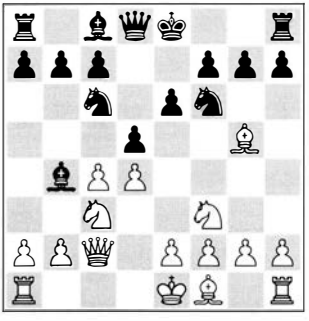


It looks as though his attack is enough to hold the balance, but he must not be afraid to sacrifice a piece: 23...exf5 24.♗d5+!? cxd5 25.♕xf5 h6 26.♕h7+ ♔f8 27.♕f5+ ♔e7 28.♘f7 ♗c8 29.♖e1+ ♘e3 30.♕g6 ♔d7 31.♖ac1 ♘c4 32.♕g4+ ♔c7 33.♕f4+ ♔d7 with perpetual check.

Game 21
Dreev,Alexey
Zviagintsev,Vadim
Groningen 1997

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 ♘c6 5.♘f3 d5 6.♗g5

A natural developing move: White brings his bishop out and pins the enemy knight.



6...h6

The most accurate move, practically forcing White to exchange knight for bishop. He does not obtain full equality after **6...dxc4 7.e3** (7.e4 h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.♗xc4 0-0⇄) **7...♕d5** (7...b5?! 8.a4! ♗a6 9.axb5 ♗xb5 10.♘d2 ♗xc3 11.bxc3±) **8.♗xf6 gxf6 9.♘d2**.

'With the white queen on a4, Black defends the extra pawn, thanks to the extra tempo he has from attacking the queen (9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 b5! etc.). Now he does not have this possibility, and the c4 pawn cannot be defended. After 9...♗xc3 10.♕xc3 b5 there follows the break 11.a4!, and Black has nothing, since White wins back the pawn and has much the better pawn position' – Lipnitsky.

Contemporary theory adds a number of corrections to this conclusion: **9...♗xc3** White is better after 9...♕g5 10.a3 ♗xc3 11.♕xc3 b6 12.h4 ♕a5 13.♕xc4 ♗b7 14.b4 ♕a4 15.♗d3± Jo. Horvath-Sulava, Rabac 2004. **10.♕xc3 e5** If 10...b5, then 11.♗e2! ♗b7 12.♗f3 ♕f5 13.b3± is even stronger than 11.a4. **11.dxe5 ♗e6** 11...♕xe5!?. **12.exf6 0-0-0 13.♘xc4 ♖hg8 14.f3 ♖g6 15.♘d2 ♕f5 16.♘e4±** Kantsler-Gurgenidze, Tbilisi 1986.

After **6...0-0 7.e3 h6**...



Analysis diagram

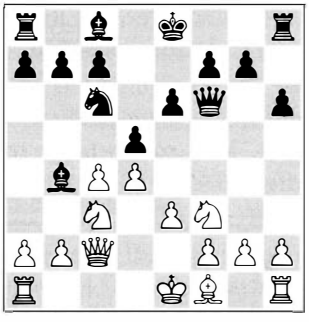
White, as well as the exchange on h6, has the additional possibility of **8.♗h4**, since now the pawn on d4 is solidly defended and there is no need to fear ...g7-g5-g4. Then a possible continuation is 8...♗e7 9.a3 ♘h7 10.♗xe7 ♘xe7 11.♗d3 f5 12.♘e5± Srisha-Sri Harika, New Delhi 2005.

7.♗xf6

After **7.♗h4?!** g5 8.♗g3 g4 9.♘e5 ♘xd4 10.♕a4+ White can probably regain the pawn, but Black will be firmly in control of the initiative: 10...♗d7! (weaker is 10...c6 11.e3 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♘f5, Benidze-Can, Batumi 2006, 13.cxd5 ♘xd5 14.♕xg4∞) 11.♘xd7 ♕xd7 12.♕xd7+, Echeverria D'Angelo-Sala Espi, Cullera 2005, 12...♔xd7 13.♖d1 ♘f5 14.♗e5 ♔e7 15.cxd5 exd5 16.♗xf6+ ♔xf6 17.♖xd5 ♖ad8∓.

7...♕xf6 8.e3

After **8.a3 ♗xc3+ 9.♕xc3 0-0** we transpose to the game.



8...0-0

The immediate **8...e5?** fails to 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 ♕xe5 11.♕a4+ winning a piece.

The plan of preparing ...e6-e5 also has its drawbacks: **8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 0-0 10.0-0 ♗d6 11.♖ad1 e5 12.♘d5** The whole of this variation was suggested by Lipnitsky, who pointed out that the

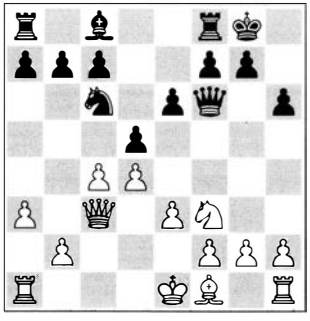
black queen does not have a satisfactory retreat square. But this is not quite true: **12...♕d8 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♗xe5 15.f4** It turns out that White cannot exploit the opposition of queen and rook, because the knight does not have a good discovery. For example, after 15.♘b6? there follows 15...♗xh2+ 16.♔xh2 ♕h4+ 17.♔g1 axb6, and the advantage goes over to Black. **15...♗d6 16.f5 ♕g5 17.♖f3** (Shabalov-Sokolin, New York 1993) **17...c6 18.♘c3 ♗xh2+ 19.♔xh2 ♕h4+ 20.♔g1 ♕xc4∓**.

Instead of 11.♖ad1, the move **11.♖ac1!?** deserves consideration, e.g.: **11...e5 12.♘e4 ♕g6** 12...♕e7 13.d5 ♘b4 14.♕c3±; 12...♕d8 13.♘xd6 cxd6 14.♖fd1±. **13.♘xd6 ♕xc2 14.♖xc2 cxd6 15.dxe5 dxe5 16.♗b3±**.

9.a3

After **9.♗e2** there could follow 9...dxc4 (9...e5 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.cxd5±) 10.0-0 ♘a5 11.♘e5 ♕e7⇄.

9...♗xc3+ 10.♕xc3



10...♖e8

Black wants to implement the basic Ragozin plan with ...e6-e5. Several other set-ups are also worth considering:

A) **10...a5**, so as to prevent the space-gaining b2-b4: 11.b3 ♖e8 12.♗e2 e5 13.dxe5 (13.cxd5 exd4 14.♘xd4 ♘xd4 15.♕xd4 ♕xd4 16.exd4 ♗f5 17.♖a2 ♖ad8 18.0-0 ♖xd5∓ Masse-Luksza, Quebec 2007) 13...♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♕xe5 15.♕xe5 ♖xe5 16.cxd5 ♖xd5 17.♖c1 c6= Shmat-Marusenko, Kiev 2008;

B) **10...a6** 11.♗e2 dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♖d8 13.♗a2 ♗d7 (very cautious play; Black first of all ensures that his opponent cannot become active in the centre) 14.0-0 ♖ac8 15.♖ac1 ♗e8 16.♖fd1 ♘e7 17.♕a5 ♗c6 18.♕e5 ♗xf3 19.♕xf6 gxf6 20.gxf3 c6= Ali-Magerramov, Abu Dhabi 2001.

11.♖c1

11.♗e2 dxc4 12.♗xc4 e5 13.d5 ♘d4! 14.♘d2 (Malakhatko-Szymanski, Bydgoszcz 2000) 14...♕g5 15.0-0-0 (15.0-0? ♗h3) 15...♘f5 16.♘e4 ♕e7⇄; 11.♖d1 dxc4 12.♗xc4 e5 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♖xe5 15.♖d5 ♖xd5 16.♕xf6 gxf6 17.♗xd5 ♗e6 18.♗xe6 fxe6= Kuljasevic-Fercec, Rabac 2003.

11...♗d7 12.cxd5 exd5 13.♗e2



'After castling, White will establish pressure on the queenside, since his opponent has no counterplay. Realising the dangers of his position, Zviagintsev

makes a deep pawn sacrifice, as a result of which he hopes to exploit White's slight development lag' – Dvoretsky.

13...♘d8!

Black plans a regrouping, the aim of which is to play ...c7-c6 and weaken White's pressure on the queenside.

14.♘e5

He gets nothing from 14.♕xc7?! ♖c8 15.♕xc8 (or 15.♕xd7 ♖xc1+ 16.♔d2 ♖xh1 17.♕xe8+ ♔h7) 15...♗xc8 16.♖xc8 ♕f5, and White can forget about playing for a win.

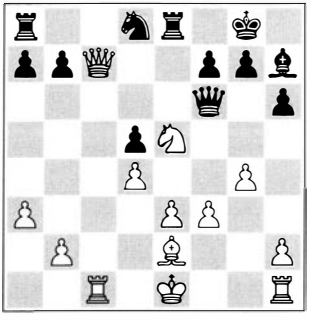
14...♗f5 15.g4?!

A double-edged move: White now wins a pawn, but his king can get caught in the centre. In Dvoretsky's opinion, White should not have taken up the gauntlet; after 15.0-0 c6 16.b4 he would retain a small advantage, without risking anything.

15...♗e4!

'Before retreating, Black provokes a weakening of the enemy pawn structure. It would be completely prospectless to play 15...♗e6? 16.h4±/∞' – Dvoretsky.

16.f3 ♗h7 17.♕xc7



17...♘c6!

After 17...♕h4+ 18.♔d2 ♖e7 19.♕d6 ♘e6 20.♖c3 Black does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn. Vadim Zviagintsev agrees to give up another pawn, just to exchange off the powerful knight at e5 and open the e-file.

18.♘xc6 bxc6 19.♖c3

The line 19.♕xc6 ♕xc6 20.♖xc6 ♖xe3 21.♔f2 ♖b3 leads to a position from the game.
After 19.♖xc6 ♕g5 20.♖c3 (20.f4 ♕h4+ 21.♔d2 ♗e4) 20...♖xe3 21.h4 ♖xc3 22.♕xc3 ♕d8 Black has a strong initiative for the pawn.

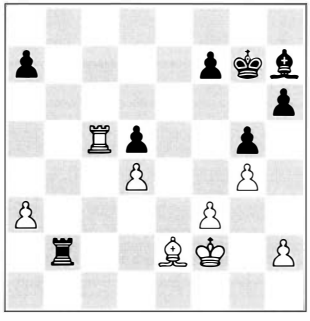
19...♖e7 20.♕xc6

After this, a roughly equal endgame arises by force, but White already has no advantage.

20...♕xc6 21.♖xc6 ♖xe3 22.♔f2 ♖b3 23.♖hc1 g5

Mate was threatened on c8.

24.♖c8+ ♖xc8 25.♖xc8+ ♔g7 26.♖c5 ♖xb2



27.♔e1

After 27.♖xd5 ♗d3 28.♖e5 ♗c4 it is very hard for White to untangle. For example, after 29.♔e1 there follows

29...♗xe2 30.♖xe2 ♖b3 – Black regains the pawn and equalises.

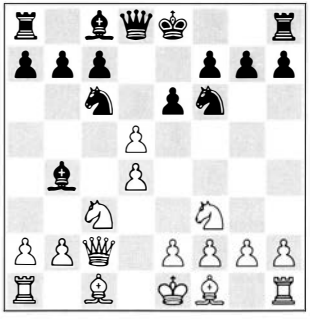
27...♖b1+ 28.♔d2 ♖b2+ 29.♔d1 ♖b1+ 30.♔d2 ♖b2+ 31.♔e1 ♖b1+ 32.♔f2 ♖b2

Draw.

Game 22
Chernin,Alexander
Zviagintsev,Vadim
Portoroz 1997

1.c4 e6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 ♘c6 5.♘f3 d5 6.cxd5

Black must reckon with this exchange in all lines of the Ragozin. This version is not especially dangerous for him.



6...exd5

A simple and reliable reply. Less good is **6...♕xd5**, because he does not manage to stir up any complications anyway, and Black only creates problems for himself in securing equality: **7.e3 e5** White has a small but stable advantage after 7...0-0 8.♗d2 ♗xc3 9.♗xc3 ♘e4 10.♗d3 f5 11.0-0 b6 12.b4 ♘xc3 13.♕xc3±. **8.♘xe5** 8.dxe5 ♗xc3+ – so as not to blunder a piece to a queen check on a4 – 9.♕xc3 ♘e4 10.♕d3 ♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♘xd2 12.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 13.♔xd2 ♗g4 14.♘d4 0-0-0 15.h3 ♗e6 16.♔c3 ♘xe5 17.♘xe6 fxe6 18.♗e2±. **8...♗xc3+ 9.♕xc3 ♘e4 10.♕a3 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♕xe5 12.f3 ♘d6 13.♗d2 0-0 14.♖c1±**.

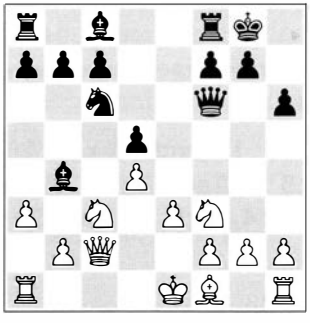
7.♗g5 h6

It is worth considering **7...♕d6** with the idea of ...♘e4. If White still exchanges on f6, then Black's h-pawn remains on h7, and we have already spoken of how this can favour him in a number of variations, Possible then is 8.♗xf6 (8.e3 ♘e4 9.♗f4 ♕g6 10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 0-0 12.c4 ♗e6⇄ H. Zimmermann-Diez, Frankfurt 2006) 8...♕xf6 9.e3 ♗f5 10.♗d3 ♗xd3 11.♕xd3 ♕g6 12.♕xg6 hxg6 13.♔e2 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♘a5 15.♘d2 0-0-0⇄ Illescas-D.Morovic, Barcelona 2000.

8.♗xf6

After **8.♗h4?! g5 9.♗g3 g4** Black seizes the initiative: 10.♘e5 ♘xd4 11.♕a4+ ♗d7 12.♘xd7 ♕xd7 13.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 14.0-0-0 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♘b5 16.♔c2 ♔c6∓.

8...♕xf6 9.e3 0-0 10.a3



10...♗xc3+

Practice has also seen **10...♗f5** 11.♗d3 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 ♖ad8 14.0-0 ♘a5 15.♘d2 ♕c6⇄ Sergienko-Provotorov, Voronezh 2004.

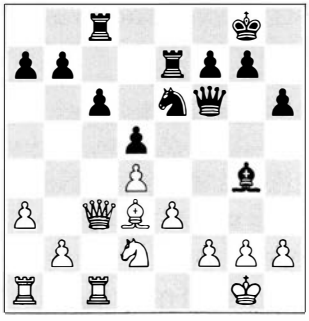
11.♕xc3 ♗g4

11...♕g6 12.b4 a6 13.g3 ♗g4 14.♗g2 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 ♕f5 16.♗g2 ♖ad8 17.0-0 ♖d7 18.a4 ♘e7 19.b5 axb5 20.axb5± V. Lazarev-Naumkin, Porto San Giorgio 1997.

12.♘d2

12.♗e2!? ♖fe8 13.0-0 ♖e7 14.♖fe1 ♘d8 15.♘e5 ♗xe2 16.♖xe2 ♘e6 17.b4 ♖d8 18.b5± Zygouris-Ivanovic, Corfu 1990.

12...♖ae8 13.♘b3 ♖e7 14.♗b5 ♘d8 15.0-0 c6 16.♗d3 ♘e6 17.♖fc1 ♖c8 18.♘d2



White prepares a minority attack, but he does not manage to start it – Zviagintsev forces mass exchanges in the centre.

18...c5 19.dxc5 ♕xc3 20.♖xc3 ♖xc5 21.♖ac1 ♖xc3 22.♖xc3 d4 23.exd4 ♘xd4 24.f3 ♘e2+ ½-½

Game 23
Lipnitsky,Isaak
Smyslov,Vasily
Moscow 1951

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 ♘c6 5.♘f3 d5 6.a3

Thanks to this move, White obtains the bishop pair, but remains slightly behind in development – the standard situation in the Ragozin.

6...♗xc3+

Of course, the bishop must be exchanged – after **6...♗e7 7.♗g5** White gets a good version of the Queen's Gambit, as the black knight on c6 is very badly placed.

7.bxc3

After **7.♕xc3 ♘e4** followed by ...e6-e5 interesting complications arise, which we will examine later. White can avoid these by taking with the pawn, but then too, Black has a reliable path to equality.



7...♘a5

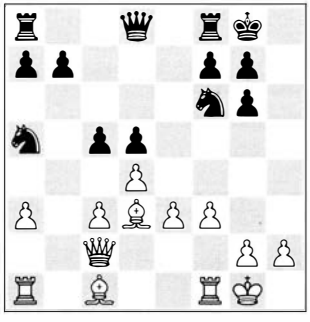
The standard manoeuvre: Smyslov seeks to occupy the light squares on the queenside at once. It is also possible to play to hold the gambit pawn: **7...dxc4** 8.e4 ♘a5 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♗xc4 ♘xc4 12.♕a4+ ♕d7 13.♕xc4 b6 14.0-0 ♗b7 15.♖fe1 ♖g8⇄ Deshmukh-Giorgadze, Calcutta 1994.

8.♘e5

This active move, as we have already seen several times in the Ragozin, only ends up being a loss of time.

Interesting, but not dangerous for Black, is **8.♕a4+** c6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♗g5 ♘c4 (10...b5 11.♕b4±) 11.e3 ♘d6 12.♗d3 h6 13.♗h4 ♗f5=.

A more fundamental try for White is **8.cxd5 exd5 9.e3** In the variation 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 11.e4 ♕e6 12.e5 0-0 13.♗d3 c5!? Black has good counterplay. **9...0-0 10.♗d3 ♗g4** The pawn sacrifice 10...♘e4!? is worth considering, the idea of which is to set up a light-square blockade: 11.♗xe4 dxe4 12.♕xe4 ♖e8 13.♕f4 ♕d5 14.0-0 ♗f5 or 13.♕c2 ♕d5 14.0-0 ♘c4 15.♘d2 ♗f5, in both cases with good compensation. **11.0-0 c5 12.♘e5** After 12.dxc5 ♗xf3 13.gxf3 ♕c8! 14.a4 ♖e8 Black regains the pawn, because 15.♗a3? is bad because of 15...♕h3 16.♕e2 ♘c6 with dangerous threats on the kingside. **12...♗h5 13.f3** White wants to advance e3-e4 and seize the initiative in the centre and on the kingside. **13...♗g6 14.♘xg6 hxg6**



Analysis diagram

'White has kept his light-squared bishop, at the cost of strengthening the black kingside. Therefore, now it is difficult for him to organise an attack on the black king, which is protected by the pawn barrier f7, g7, g6. Black, meanwhile, can continue his activity in the centre and on the queenside, using the great activity of his two knights' – Lipnitsky.

15.♕f2! 'White threatens 16.♗b2 and e3-e4. With his next few moves, Black prevents this' – Lipnitsky. **15...♘b3 16.♖b1 ♘xc1 17.♖fxc1 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♖c8!** Black has stopped the advance e3-e4 for a long time and obtained a good game, Geller-Lipnitsky, Kiev 1948. Certainly, after 19.e4 there could follow 19...♖xc1+ 20.♖xc1 dxe4 21.fxe4?! (21.♗xe4=) 21...♘g4 22.♕b2 ♕g5! 23.♖e1 ♘xh2!, and Black wins a pawn.

Back to the game.



8...♘d7!

This strong move shows that White cannot hold the c4-square. In addition, Black wins a tempo for the development of his pieces.

9.♘xd7

9.cxd5 ♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♕xd5 favours Black.

9...♗xd7 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗f4 ♗b5

'The culmination of Black's manoeuvre. Now after **12.e3** there follows **12...♗xf1 13.♔xf1 0-0**, and White's position is very difficult. It is hard for

him to create any initiative in the centre or on the kingside, whilst Black's queenside offensive after ...♖a8-c8 and ...c7-c5 develops automatically. The white bishop on f4 plays an especially unfortunate role, cut off from its queenside pawns. It is obvious that the black knight will be much stronger than the white bishop' – Lipnitsky.



12.h4?!

A nervous move – leaving the king in the centre, with the e-file open, is very dangerous. It was essential to prepare kingside castling: **12.a4** ♗c4 13.g3 0-0 14.♗g2 ♖e8 15.♗f3 c5 16.dxc5 ♘b3 17.♖b1 ♘xc5 18.0-0 ♖c8 – Black has a slight initiative, but no more.

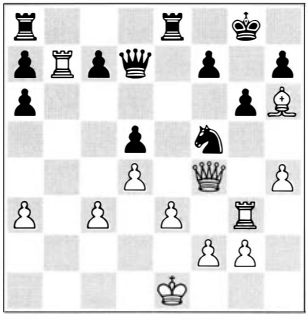
12...0-0 13.♖b1 ♕d7 14.♖h3 ♖fe8 15.♖g3 ♘c4

Smyslov cold-bloodedly brings all his reserves into position for the decisive battle. White's under-prepared demonstration on the kingside does not disturb him.

16.♗h6 g6 17.♕c1 ♘d6 18.♕f4 ♗a6

White had set a trap: 18...♘f5 19.♖xb5!? with the idea of 19...♘xg3 (19...♕xb5 20.♕xf5) 20.fxg3 ♕xb5 21.♕f6, and Black must give perpetual check. But actually, it was perfectly possible to walk into this trap: 19...♖e4! 20.♕g5 ♕xb5 21.♕xf5 (21.f3 ♖xe2+ 22.♗xe2 ♖e8) 21...♕b1+ 22.♔d2 ♖xd4+! 23.cxd4 ♕xf5, winning.
Also very strong was 18...♖e4 19.♕f6 ♘f5 or 19.♕g5 ♖ae8.

19.e3 ♘f5 20.♗xa6 bxa6 21.♖b7



21...♖ab8!

The start of a textbook counterattack.

22.♖xc7 ♖b1+ 23.♔e2 ♕a4!

Mate is unavoidable. White resigned.

Game 24
Kuzmin,Alexey
Gurgenidze,Bukhuti
Erevan 1996

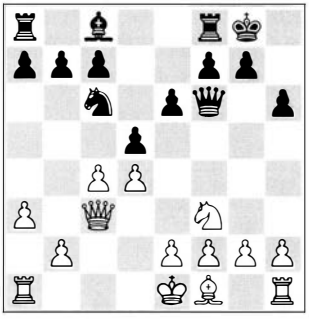
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.♕c2 d5 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.♕xc3



7...♘e4

Black hopes to exploit his lead in development, and for this purpose, he immediate initiates complications in the centre. This logical decision is at the same time rather risky: if Black does not achieve something positive, then the opening of the game can turn out in White's favour, since he has the bishop pair.

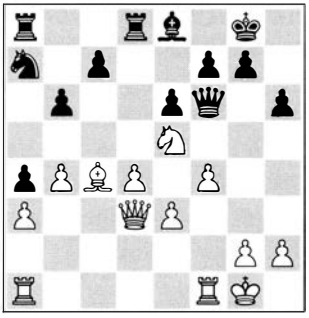
A more solid alternative is **7...0-0 8.♗g5** The position after 8.e3 is considered in the following game. **8...h6 9.♗xf6** 9.♗h4!? g5 10.♗g3 (Izquierdo-Carvalho, Uruguay 1989) 10...♘e4 11.♕d3 h5⇄. **9...♕xf6**



Analysis diagram

10.b4 The move 10.e3 is looked at in the example of Dreev-Zviagintsev. **10...dxc4 11.b5 ♘e7 12.e3 b6⇄**;

Also possible is **7...a5!? 8.♗g5** We will return to the position after 8.e3 0-0. **8...h6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.e3 0-0 11.b3** Also better for White is 11.♗d3 ♖e8 12.0-0 dxc4 13.♗xc4 e5 14.d5 ♘d8 15.♖ac1 ♖e7 16.♘d2± Doroshkievich-Tseshkovsky, Kuibyshev 1970. **11...♗d7 12.♗d3 ♖fc8 13.0-0** We are following the game Capablanca-Mikenas, Buenos Aires 1939. Capablanca has played the opening very logically and accurately, and has obtained a small, but long-lasting advantage. His opponent, the Lithuanian master Vladas Mikenas, tries to organise a light-square blockade on the queenside and gives White a free hand in the centre. **13...a4?! 14.b4 dxc4 15.♗xc4 ♘a7 16.♘e5! ♗e8 17.f4 b6?** The break ...c7-c5 is from the realms of fantasy here, and it was essential instead to strengthen the defences on the kingside with 17...♘b5 18.♕d3 ♘d6±. **18.♕d3 ♖d8**



Analysis diagram

19.f5! b5 Clearly, Black had placed his hopes on this move: now if the bishop retreats to a2, then the knight on e5 is lost. However, now there follows a 'little combination' very much in the Capablanca style. **20.fxe6! bxc4 21.♖xf6 cxd3 22.exf7+ ♗xf7** 22...♔f8? 23.♘g6#. **23.♖xf7** White has not only won a pawn, but completely dominates the board, whilst the pawn on d3 can hardly be saved. **23...♘b5 24.♖f2 ♖d5 25.♘xd3 ♖e8 26.♖f3**, and Black resigned.

8.♕b3

Today this move is considered strongest, although tomorrow theory may well change its mind. This sharp variation has not been seen at the highest level for a long time, and so the question of where the queen should best retreat to remains open.

A) Judging by the database, the most common move is **8.♕c2**. However, this allows the energetic retort **8...e5!**. 'This active blow against the white centre seems the most logical and best continuation. Black opens the diagonal for his light-squared bishop, offering a pawn sacrifice in the process. However, accepting it involves dangerous consequences for White' – Lipnitsky.[1]

More modest play does not promise Black full equality, e.g. 8...0-0 9.e3 a5 10.♗d3 f5 11.b3 ♗d7 12.0-0 ♖f6 13.♘e1 ♖h6 14.g3 g5 15.f3± (Dolmatov-Gurgenidze, Kharkov 1985) or 8...♕f6 9.e3 ♕g6 10.b4 ♘g5 11.♕d1 ♘xf3+ 12.♕xf3 dxc4 13.♗d2 e5 (Chalmeta Ugas-Fier, Barcelona 2008) 14.b5 ♘e7 15.dxe5±.



9.e3 White wants to complete his development as rapidly as possible, to stabilise his position and then have the advantage thanks to his two bishops. The following variations show that taking the pawn is possible, although Black has sufficient resources to maintain the balance: 9.dxe5 ♗f5 10.♕b3 (10.♕a4 0-0 'Black's advantage in development is so great that White will come under serious attack in the near future' – Lipnitsky 11.e3 d4! 12.♗d3 dxe3 13.♗xe4 exf2+ 14.♔xf2 ♗xe4 15.♖d1 ♕e7∓ Kauppi-Mestilainen, corr. 1981) 10...♘a5 11.♕a4+ c6 12.♘d4 (more solid is 12.cxd5 ♕xd5 13.♗e3 ♘c4 14.♗d4 b5 15.♕b3 c5⇄ Baburin-Saidy, Los Angeles 1997) 12...♗g6 13.e3 0-0 14.cxd5 ♘c5 15.♕b4 ♕xd5 16.♗d2 (Medic-Djingarova, Zadar 2005) 16...♘cb3! 17.♘xb3 (17.♖d1 c5 18.♕b5 a6 19.♕b6 cxd4) 17...♘xb3 18.♖d1 ♗c2∓.

9...♗f5



Analysis diagram

1 Translator's Note: The move 8.♕c2 transposes into a position from the well-known Nimzo-Indian line starting 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 d5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 ♘e4 7.♕c2 ♘c6. Now theory has been unanimous for over 75 years that the only correct move here is 8.e3, leading to great complications after 8...e5 9.cxd5 ♕xd5 10.♗c4 ♕a5+ 11.b4 ♘xb4 etc. By contrast, 8.♘f3 reaches our Ragozin position, and has long been regarded as harmless because of 8...e5!

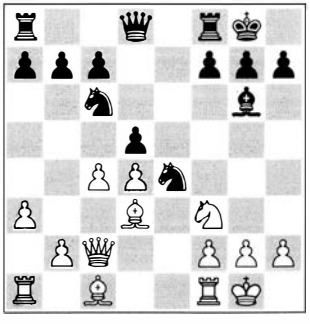
10.♗d3 'Dictated by a desire to avoid the following queen excursion, at the expense of development' – Lipnitsky. Let us look at various alternatives:

A) 10.♕b3 ♘a5! 11.♕a4+ c6 12.cxd5 ♕xd5 13.♘xe5 (13.dxe5? ♖d8 14.♘d4 ♘c5!−+; 13.b4 ♘b3 14.♖b1 ♘xd4! 15.♘xd4 ♘c3 16.♕b3 ♗xb1 17.♗c4 ♕xg2 18.♗xf7+ ♔f8 19.♘e6+ ♔e7!−+) 13...♘d6 14.♘d3 ♗xd3 15.♗xd3 ♘b3 16.♖b1 ♕xg2 17.♖f1 ♘xc1∓ draw, Mirzoev-Röder, Balaguer 2007;

B) 10.♕a4 0-0 11.cxd5 ♕xd5 12.♕b5 ♕xb5 13.♗xb5 ♘a5 14.♗a4 exd4 15.♘xd4 ♘c5 16.♗d1 ♘d3+ 17.♔e2 ♗g6⇄ Grünfeld-Fine, Zandvoort 1936;

C) 10.cxd5 ♕xd5 11.♗c4 ♕a5+ 12.♗d2 (12.b4? ♘xb4 13.axb4 ♕xa1∓ Rocha-De Souza, Brazil 1998) 12...♘xd2 13.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 14.♔xd2 exd4 15.exd4 0-0-0 16.♔c3=.

10...exd4 11.exd4 White can also offer a pawn sacrifice with 11.0-0, although Black does best to decline the gambit and also get on with his development: 11...♗g6 12.exd4 0-0 and now:

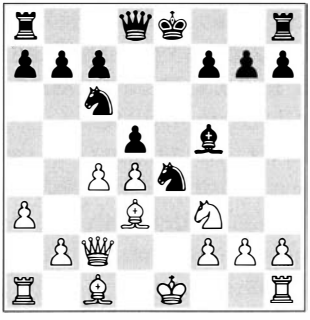


Analysis diagram

A) The following game is not just of historical interest. It shows that White cannot blandly play on the queenside without any concerns, because his king is too vulnerable: 13.♗e3 ♖e8 14.c5 ♕f6 – Black forces attention to the pawn at d4 – 15.♕b3 ♗h5 16.♘d2 ♘xd2 17.♗xd2 (Opocensky-Flohr, Prague 1930) 17...♘xd4 18.♕xb7 ♖ab8 19.♕xd5 (19.♕xc7 ♘b3∓) 19...♘f3+! 20.gxf3 ♖e5 21.♗xh7+ ♔h8 22.♕d3 ♗xf3 23.♖fe1 ♖g5+ 24.♔f1 ♗g2+ 25.♔g1 ♖g4 26.♗f5 ♗e4+ 27.♗xg4 ♗xd3∓;

B) 13.b4 ♖e8 14.c5 a6 15.♗b2 ♘g5 16.♘e5 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3 ♕f6 18.♖ae1 ♖ad8⇄ Lautier-Timman, Moscow 1994.

Back to the position after 11.exd4.



Analysis diagram

Here Black has a pleasant choice between a quieter and a sharper continuation:

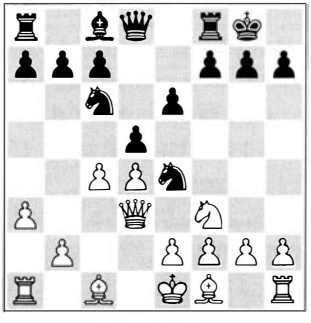
A1) **11...dxc4!? 12.♗xe4** Little is promised by 12.♕xc4 0-0 13.0-0 ♘d6 14.♕c3 ♘e7⇄ Regedzinski-Fine, Lodz 1935. **12...♕e7 13.♘d2 ♘xd4 14.♕xc4** 14.♕b1? ♗xe4 15.♘xe4 f5∓. **14...♗xe4 15.0-0** 15.♕xd4? ♗xg2+. **15...0-0-0!** 'The only, but sufficient continuation. Black is splendidly developed. The principle of centralisation (the move ...♖he8 is coming up) is superbly demonstrated here' – Lipnitsky. **16.♖e1 ♗d3** This move was suggested long ago by Grünfeld. Also possible is 16...f5 17.♘xe4 (17.f3?

♕h4! 18.g3 ♗d5 19.gxh4 ♗xc4 20.♘xc4 ♘xf3+ 21.♔f2 ♘xe1 22.♔xe1 ♖d4−+) 17...fxe4 18.♗f4. **17.♖xe7 ♗xc4 18.♘xc4 ♘b3 19.♗f4 ♘xa1 20.♖xc7+** A striking blow. 20.♘b6+? with the idea 20...axb6? 21.♖xc7+ ♔b8 22.♖c4+ ♔a8 23.♖a4# fails to the cold-blooded refutation 20...cxb6. **20...♔b8 21.♖xf7+ ♔a8 22.g3=**;

A2) **11...0-0 12.0-0 ♖e8 13.♗e3** 13.♖e1 ♕d6 14.b4 ♗g6 15.♗b2 ♘f6 16.♗xg6 hxg6 17.♘e5 dxc4 18.♕xc4 ♕d5 19.♖ec1 ♕xc4 20.♖xc4 ♘xe5 21.dxe5 ♘d5⇄ M. Gurevich-Winants, Netherlands 1996/97. **13...dxc4 14.♕xc4 ♘d6 15.♕c2 ♘e7 16.♗xf5 ♘dxf5 17.♖fe1 c6 18.♖ad1 ♕d5 19.♕c5 f6 20.♗d2 a6∓** V.Makogonov-Botvinnik, Leningrad 1939.

B) **8.♕d3** In Lipnitsky's day, this move was considered practically a refutation of Black's idea with ...♘e4. However, subsequent research has not upheld this view. Certainly, 8...e5? fails because of 9.dxe5 ♗f5 10.cxd5 ♘e7 11.g4±, but Black has a choice between 8...a5 and 8...0-0:

B1) **8...0-0**

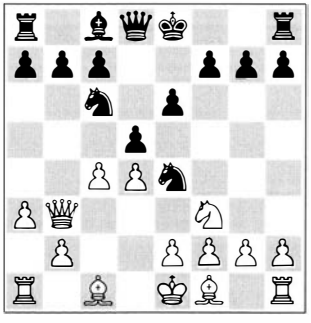


Analysis diagram

9.g3 'White does not obstruct his queen's bishop with the move e2-e3 and, fianchettoing his king's bishop, tries to create pressure in the centre. The move 9.b4! also deserves consideration. In this case, it is hard for Black to attack the white queenside pawn phalanx, since 9...a5 leads after 10.b5 ♘a7 11.c5 to a difficult position for him. On the other hand, Black cannot dream about becoming active in the centre with ...e6-e5. After 9.b4! f5 10.g3 and 11.♗g2 White has a clear advantage. By comparison with variations of the Stonewall, White has retained his dark-squared bishop, whilst Black has not, and in addition, Black is cramped on the queenside' – Lipnitsky. **9...b6** 9...♘a5! 10.b3 c5⇄. **10.cxd5!** White meets the threat of 10...♗a6 and opens lines for his rooks, so as to create pressure against the backward pawn on c7. **10...exd5 11.♗g2 ♕f6 12.O-O ♗f5 13.♘h4 ♗e6 14.♗e3 ♖fe8 15.♖ac1 ♗d7 16.♖c2 a6 17.b4±** Botvinnik-Ragozin, Leningrad 1932;

B2) **8...a5 9.♗f4** (Konovalov-Tukhaev, Evpatoria 2008) 9.b3 b6 10.g3 ♗a6 11.♕c2 (Justo-Gervasio, Clichy 2002) 11...a4∓. **9...0-0 10.e3 ♗d7 11.♗e2 ♘e7⇄**.

Back to the game.



8...0-0

The immediate **8...♘a5** is also good, immediately beginning a fight for the

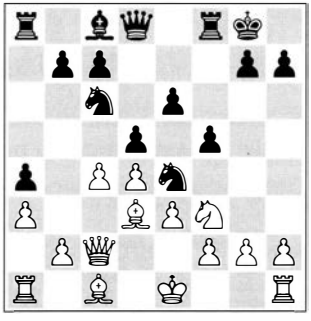
light squares: **9.♕a4+ c6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.e3 ♗f5 12.♗d3** 12.♗d2 ♘xd2 13.♘xd2 0-0 14.♗e2 (Llorens-Heilemann, corr. 1964) 14...b5!? 15.♕d1 ♕e7 16.0-0 ♘c4 17.♕c1 ♖fc8 18.b3 ♘d6⇄. **12...♕b6 13.♕c2?** A bad decision, allowing Black to freeze the opponent's queenside and begin an attack in the centre. Correct was 13.b4 ♘c4 14.♕c2 ♘cd6 with roughly equal chances. **13...♘b3 14.♖b1 c5! 15.♘h4 ♗e6∓** Rudakovsky-Botvinnik, Moscow 1945.

9.e3 a5

We are already familiar with this plan – Black pushes the pawn to a4, seizing space on the flank and preventing the opponent from defending the c4 pawn with b2-b3.

Also possible is **9...b6** 10.♕c2 ♗b7 11.cxd5 exd5 12.b4 ♘e7 13.♗e2 ♘f5 14.0-0 ♖e8 15.a4 ♖c8⇄ C.Hansen-Borriss, Germany Bundesliga 2001/02.

10.♗d3 a4 11.♕c2 f5



Black has placed his pawns in the centre in the manner of the Stonewall. Of course, he lacks his dark-squared bishop, which is a pity. On the other hand, White's pieces are not ideally placed – in particular, he would prefer to have fianchettoed both bishops.

12.0-0 ♗d7 13.♗d2

In one game, White immediately tried an attack in the centre: **13.cxd5** exd5 14.♘e5 ♘a5 15.f3 ♘d6 16.♘xd7 ♕xd7 17.♗d2 ♘b3 18.♖ae1 b6 19.♗c3 ♕e6 (Black tries to prevent the advance e3-e4 by any means) 20.♕f2 ♘e4! (a nice tactical trick, depriving his opponent of the two bishops) 21.♕h4 ♘xc3 22.bxc3 h6⇄ Grigore-Kogan, Bastia 2003 (rapid).

13...♖f6

As in the Dutch Defence, Black seeks chances on the kingside. However, organising a serious attack is not easy here, as he has few pieces in this sector of the board.

14.b4

This move allows Black to force a series of exchanges and significantly ease his position. Later, White managed to strengthen his play: **14.♖fc1 ♖h6 15.♗e1 g5 16.♘d2** The more active knight leap deserves attention: 16.♘e5!? ♘xe5 17.dxe5 ♗c6 18.f3 ♘c5 19.♖d1±. **16...g4 17.♘f1 ♗e8 18.b4 ♘g5**, Milov-Kogan, Santo Domingo 2002 (or 18...axb3 19.♕xb3 dxc4 20.♗xc4 ♕e7 21.d5±), and White could have obtained a large advantage with 19.cxd5 ♕xd5 20.♗c4 ♕e4 (20...♕d6 21.♕xf5) 21.♕d1 ♘e7 22.b5 b6 23.♗b4 ♔f7 24.♘g3 ♕b7 25.d5+–.

Black's play can probably be improved, but at the moment, in the line 7...♘e4 8.♕b3 the ball is in Black's court.

14...axb3 15.♕xb3 ♘xd2 16.♘xd2 ♘a5 17.♕b2 dxc4 18.♗xc4 ♗c6



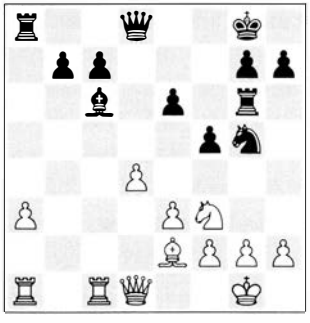
Black has enlivened his bishop, opening the long diagonal, and has obtained satisfactory play.

19.♗e2 ♖g6 20.♘f3 ♘c4 21.♕c3 ♘d6 22.♖fc1 ♘e4 23.♕e1 ♘g5

Seizing the chance to exchange knights, before White can get his steed to e5.

24.♕d1

Not 24.♘e5?? ♘h3+ 25.♔h1 ♗xg2#.



White wants to exchange both pairs of minor pieces, so as to weaken the pressure on the long diagonal. However, as a result, he could have fallen into an unpleasant pin.

24...♗a4

It seems that Bukhuti Gurgenidze was peaceably disposed and is prepared to force a draw by repetition. Otherwise, he might have played **24...♕d5!?**, after which it is not so simple for White to untangle: **25.♔h1** Both 25.♖c5? ♘xf3+ 26.♗xf3 ♕xf3, and 25.♔f1? ♗a4 26.♕d2 (26.♕d3 ♘xf3 27.♗xf3 ♗b5; 26.♕e1 ♘xf3 27.♗xf3 ♗b5+ 28.♔g1 ♕xf3) 26...♘xf3 27.♗xf3 ♗b5+ 28.♔e1 ♕xf3 are bad. **25...♖f8 26.♗c4** He loses after 26.♖c5? ♘e4! 27.♖xd5 ♘xf2+ 28.♔g1 ♘xd1 29.♖c5 ♘xe3. **26...♕d6** After 26...♕e4 27.♗e2 ♖h6 28.♖xc6 ♘xf3 29.♗xf3 ♕h4 30.♕g1 bxc6 31.a4 White has sufficient compensation for the exchange. **27.♗e2 f4** – Black has the initiative.

25.♕d2 ♗c6 26.♘xg5 ♕xg5 27.♗f1 ♗f3?!

Not 27...♗xg2? 28.f4, but better is 27...f4 28.exf4 ♕d5 29.♖xc6 ♕xc6 30.g3 with mutual chances.

28.g3 ♕d8 29.♕c3 ♗c6 30.♗g2 ♖a6 31.♗xc6 ♖xc6 32.♕a5 ♖b6 33.♕e5

White has repulsed the attack on his kingside and obtained a clear advantage, because now the rook on g6 is out of play and the black king is weakened.

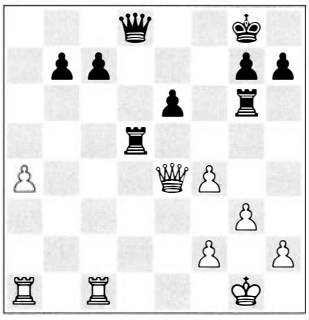
33...♖d6 34.♕c5 ♖d7 35.a4 f4

Probably correct; Black tries to muddy the waters a little, and sets a cunning trap.

36.exf4 ♖xd4 37.♕e5

The pawn is untouchable: after 37.♕xc7? ♖d1+! 38.♔g2 Black has a pleasant choice between 38...♕xc7, winning a rook, and 38...♕d5+ 39.f3 ♖d2+ with mate in a few moves. After 37.♕a7 ♖xf4 38.♕xb7 ♕d4 39.♖a2 h5 the situation becomes sharper, which is not to White's benefit.

37...♖d5 38.♕e4



38...b6?!

A new and unnecessary weakening of the position. Black should try to return the rook to the defence with 38...♖f6. Clearly things are still not so sweet for him, but after 39.a5 c6 40.a6 bxa6 41.♖xc6 ♖d1+ 42.♖xd1 ♕xd1+ 43.♔g2 ♕d5 he retains drawing chances.

39.♖c6 e5?

The decisive mistake. Black should chase the enemy queen: 39...♖d4 40.♕e5 ♖d5 41.♕e2 ♖d2. Admittedly, after the accurate 42.♕c4 ♖d4 43.♕c1 the chase ends, and Black still has problems.

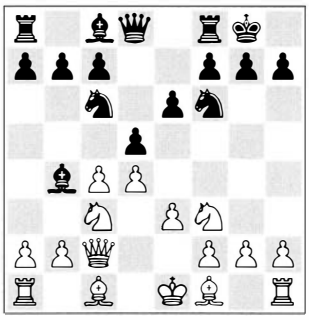
40.♖xg6 hxg6 41.fxe5 ♖d4 42.♕c6 ♕d7 43.♕xd7 ♖xd7 44.a5! bxa5 45.♖xa5 g5 46.♔g2 ♔f7 47.♔f3 ♖d4

So as not to allow the king to the fourth rank, but now the c7 pawn is lost.

48.♖c5 ♔e6 49.♖xc7 ♔xe5 50.♖xg7 ♔f6 51.♖a7 1-0

Game 25
Riumin,Nikolay
Ragozin,Viacheslav
Leningrad 1934

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 d5 5.e3 0-0 6.♘f3 ♘c6



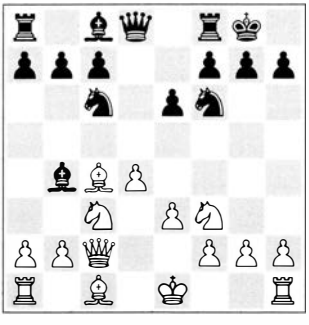
7.a3

Max Euwe recommended White's last move in the following terms: 'Very strong at this moment. Black must take on c3 and not only concede the two bishops, but also give up on ...e6-e5 for a long time.'

Later practice showed that Black is not in fact obliged to surrender the bishop pair, and he can also organise the break ...e6-e5 quite rapidly if he wishes. But in the main, the 5th World Champion was right: the move 7.a3 definitely poses Black difficult problems.

We will also look at some alternatives:

A) **7.♗e2** Or 7.♗d3. **7...dxc4 8.♗xc4**:



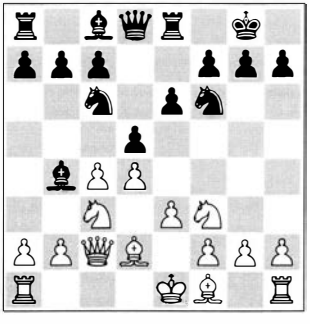
Analysis diagram

A1) **8...a6** 9.0-0 ♗d6 10.♖d1 ♕e8 11.a3 e5 12.♘g5 h6 13.♘ge4 ♘xe4 14.♘xe4 ♕e7 15.d5 ♘d8 16.♘xd6 cxd6 17.a4± Hillarp Persson-Arutinian, Heraklion 2007;

A2) **8...e5!?** In the modern interpretation of the Ragozin, this move is often played without preparation. **9.dxe5 ♘g4 10.0-0** On 10.♕e4 (Bogner-Heinz, Böblingen 2009), there is the nice retort 10...♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♕d1+! 12.♔xd1 ♘xf2+ 13.♔c2 ♘xe4∓. **10...♘cxe5 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.♗e2 c6 13.♖d1 ♕e7 14.b3 ♗g4 15.♗b2 ♖fe8⇄** Halkias-Fressinet, Gibraltar 2010;

A3) **8...♗d6** The classical way – first the bishop retreats to d6. **9.0-0 e5 10.h3 exd4** 10...♕e7!? 11.a3 ♗d7 12.d5 ♘a5 13.♗d3 c5 14.dxc6 ♘xc6 15.♖d1 ♖ac8 16.♗d2 h6 17.♖ac1 ♖fd8⇄ Naer-Fressinet, Germany Bundesliga 2009/10. **11.exd4 ♘b4 12.♕d1 ♗f5 13.a3 ♘c6 14.♖e1 h6 15.d5** 15.♘e5 ♗xe5 16.dxe5 ♕xd1 17.♘xd1 ♘d7 18.f4 (Chiburdanidze-T.Kosintseva, Ningbo 2009) 18...♘b6 19.♘e3 ♘xc4 20.♘xf5 ♖fd8⇄. **15...♘e7 16.♘d4 ♗h7 17.♘db5 ♘f5 18.♗d3 ♕d7⇄** Nisipeanu-Khalifman, Las Vegas 1999.

B) **7.♗d2!?** An insidious move. White follows Alekhine's recommended set-up, which we have seen in Chapter One, and here with an extra tempo, since the queen has gone to c2 in one move, rather than via a4. **7...♖e8** I prefer this modern continuation to the direct 7...dxc4 or the somewhat uncomfortable 7...♗d7, both also seen in practice.



Analysis diagram

We have already seen this position in Chapter One, with Black to move (see the note to Black's 7th move in the game Reshevsky-Ragozin). Kramnik, against Nakamura, retreated the bishop to f8 and then played ...e6-e5. As said, here White has an extra tempo, but I would not overestimate its significance: the position bears a semi-closed character and White's set-up is not that aggressive. I think Black is well able to obtain satisfactory play, e.g.:

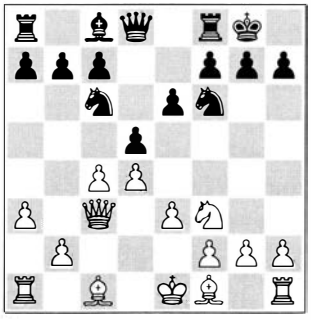
B1) **8.♖d1** a6 9.♗e2 dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♗d6 11.a3 h6 12.0-0 e5 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♗xe5 15.f4 ♗d6 16.♗c1 b5 17.♗a2 ♗b7⇄ Cafure-Emma, Buenos Aires 1965;

B2) **8.a3** ♗f8 9.♗d3 a6 10.0-0 g6 11.b4 ♗g7 12.♖ad1 b6 13.♗c1 ♗b7 14.♖fe1 dxc4 15.♗xc4 ♘d5 16.♗b2 ♘xc3 17.♗xc3 ♘a7 18.e4 ♘b5 19.♗b2 ♕e7⇄ S.Savchenko-Bagaturov, Belgorod 1989.

7...♗xc3+

Paul Keres once decided to keep the bishop and obtained a comfortable position. However, as we will see, White's play can be improved: **7...♗e7** 8.b4 b6 9.♗e2 ♗b7 10.0-0 a5 11.b5 ♘b8 12.♗b2 (12.♘e5!? c5 13.cxd5 cxd4 14.exd4 ♘xd5 15.♗d2±) 12...♘bd7 13.♘d2 c5 14.bxc6 ♗xc6 15.e4 dxe4 16.♘cxe4 ♖c8 17.♖ac1 ♕c7 18.♕d3 ♖fd8⇄ Szapiel-Keres, Szczawno Zdroj 1950.

8.♕xc3



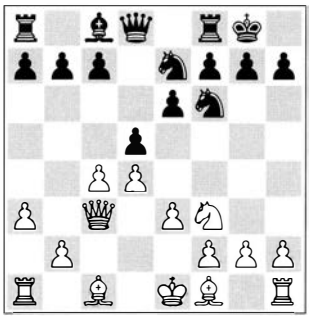
'White has two bishops, but in itself this does not signify anything. After all, it is well known that two bishops are often not an advantage, even in open positions, where they have diagonals and can combine attacking and defensive functions. Here, the dark-squared bishop is shut in and risks becoming a prisoner in its own camp for a long time to come. As far as the advance ...e6-e5 is concerned, it is true that it is difficult to achieve. But this advance is not the be-all and end-all for Black. He also has other interesting plans, amongst which a major place is occupied by the light-square play with which we are already familiar.

Thus, what matters is not dogmatic assessments, based on the presence of certain obvious elements, but deep penetration into the essence of the position, and as a consequence, the creation of a concrete plan of play' – Lipnitsky.

8...♗d7

A) **8...♘e4** 'In order to support this knight in the centre, Black will have to play ...f7-f5, which leads to a Stonewall formation, although without one of its main 'bricks', the pawn on c6' – Lipnitsky. **9.♕c2 a5** Black prevents his opponent from gaining space with the move b2-b4, and wishes himself to start play on the light squares at the first convenient moment, by means of ...a5-a4. We have seen a similar plan before, as by transposition, we have reached a position seen in the game Kuzmin-Gurgenidze, in the notes to White's 8th move (after 7...♘e4 8.♕c2 0-0 9.e3 a5). In general, White's chances are preferable here;

B) **8...♘e7** was played by Englisch against Steinitz way back at Vienna 1882.

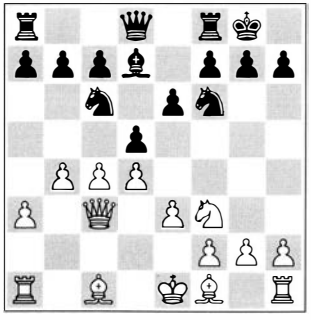


Analysis diagram

Black wishes to play ...b7-b6 and put the bishop on b7 or a6, so he moves the knight from c6, so that it will not be under attack after the exchange on d5. But this is a rather slow plan: **9.♗d3 b6 10.0-0 a5 11.b3 ♗a6 12.♘d2 ♖c8 13.♖d1±** Steinitz-Englisch, Vienna 1882. 'It is curious that a mixture of the Nimzo-Indian and Ragozin defences should have been played before either of those two masters was born' – Lipnitsky;

C) In the game Naumkin-Gurgenidze, Borzhomi 1984, Black played sharply to seize the initiative, and succeeded, but only thanks to his opponent's uncertain play: **8...♖e8 9.b4 ♘e4 10.♕c2 e5 11.cxd5 ♘xd4 12.exd4 exd4 13.♗e2** Maybe 13.♗b5 is even stronger, so as to force 13...c6 and only then play 14.♗e2. **13...♗f5 14.♘xd4 ♘g3 15.♕c3 ♖xe2+ 16.♘xe2 ♘xh1 17.♗b2 f6 18.♔f1±.**

9.b4



'This looks dangerous, since it threatens a bind on the queenside and the seizure of the square e5. But Black is ready for it. Having provoked the advance b2-b4, he fights back against the opponent on this very flank' – Lipnitsky.

We will look later at the alternative continuations **9.b3** and **9.♗d3**.

9...a5

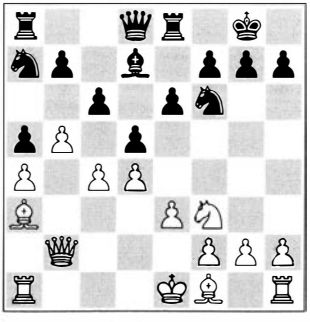
The attempt to solve the problems of the position by tactical means fails: **9...dxc4** 10.♗xc4 b5 11.♗xb5 ♘xb4 12.♗xd7 ♘bd5 13.♕c2 ♘xd7 14.e4 ♘e7 15.0-0 ♖c8 16.♗e3± Flohr-Romanovsky, Moscow 1935. The pawns on a7 and c7 are weak, and the black knights lack secure posts.

10.b5 ♘a7

This move is the prelude to an effective knight sacrifice, thanks to which this game has entered the golden fund of chess classics. I do not wish to cast aspersions on the classics, but it may very well be that the other retreat **10...♘e7!? 11.a4 c6** is stronger, and Black breaks up his opponent's pawn phalanx.

11.a4 c6 12.♗a3 ♖e8 13.♖b1

Stronger is **13.♕b2!**.



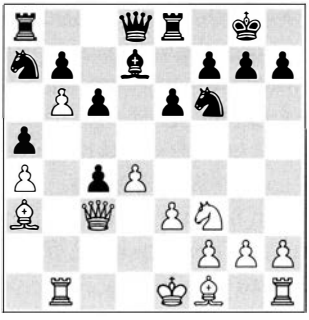
Analysis diagram

This not only defends b5, but at the same time removes the queen from the c-file, which Black can open at any moment.

After 13...dxc4 14.♗xc4 cxb5 15.axb5 ♖c8 16.♗d3 White's advantage is indisputable: the main thing is that Black has a very bad knight on a7.

13...dxc4 14.b6?

The main cause of White's problems. Correct was **14.♗xc4 ♘d5 15.♗xd5 exd5⇄**.



14...♘b5!

'Fully in accordance with Ragozin's style. Less rebellious souls would prefer 14...♘d5 or 14...♘c8' – M.Yudovich Snr.

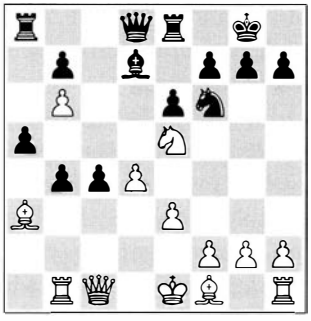
In Lipnitsky's opinion, 'more convincing is the prosaic 14...♘c8 15.♗c5 ♘d5 16.♕xc4 ♘cxb6!', and he claims an advantage for Black. But White can answer prose with prose: 15.♕xc4 ♘xb6 16.♕b3 ♘fd5 17.♘e5! ♘b4 18.♗e2 c5 19.♘xd7 ♘xd7 20.0-0 with about equal chances. Ragozin's striking move is better than the modest 14...♘c8 in pure chess terms, whilst its psychological effect exceeds even the boldest expectations.

15.axb5 cxb5 16.♘e5

16.♗xc4 ♖c8 17.♕xa5 bxc4 18.♘e5 ♖a8 19.♕c3 ♘d5! favours Black.
Probably, White should choose between **16.♗c5** ♘e4 17.♕a1 f6 18.♗e2 ♗c6∓ and **16.♕a1** b4 17.♗xc4 bxa3 18.0-0 ♕e7 19.♖b3 ♖ec8∓.

16...b4 17.♕c1?!

More tenacious is 17.♗xb4 ♘d5 18.♕b2 axb4 19.♗xc4 ♘xb6∓.



17...♗b5!

'Black fights to keep his powerful pawn phalanx at all costs. If he had to play 17...bxa3, then after 18.♕xa3 and then ♗xc4, White would be more than satisfied' – Ragozin.

18.♗e2 ♖c8 19.♗xb4

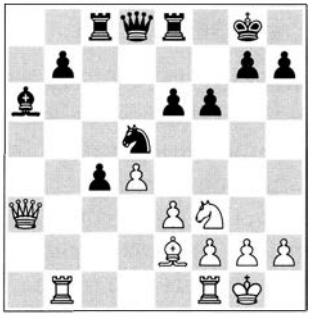
Sooner or later, White will have to return the piece, since otherwise he cannot cope with the enemy passed pawns. But he cannot save the pawn on b6.

19...axb4 20.♖xb4 ♗a6 21.0-0

After 21.♘xc4? ♘d5 22.♖b2 e5! White's position collapses.

21...♘d5 22.♖b1 ♘xb6 23.♕a3 f6 24.♘f3 ♘d5

Black has an extra pawn and the better position.



25.♘d2 f5 26.♘f3 ♕e7 27.♕a5 ♕d6 28.♘e5 b5

Played rather directly, since it will not be easy to push this pawn further, whilst now the bishop is hanging. Black misses the tactical resource 28...f4! 29.e4 ♘f6 with a large advantage, because White loses his main trump, his solid pawn position in the centre.

29.♗f3 ♖e7 30.♖fc1 ♖ec7 31.♖a1 ♖a7 32.♘d3?!

This inappropriate activity significantly speeds up the natural course of events. After 32.♖cb1 ♖cc7 33.♗xd5 exd5 (or 33...♕xd5 34.♕b6) 34.♕c3 Black would still have some serious work to do to win.

32...♖ca8 33.♘c5

After 33.♗xd5 the simplest is 33...♗b7.

33...e5

As I have already said, the powerful pawn centre is White's main hope. Now it collapses.

34.♗xd5+ ♕xd5 35.♖ab1

Losing at once, but even after 35.♘xa6 ♖xa6 36.♕xa6 ♖xa6 37.♖xa6 exd4 38.exd4 ♕xd4 the black passed pawns are unstoppable.

35...♗b7 36.e4 ♕xc5

White resigned. The effect of this game was so strong that for more than 20 years, commentators awarded the move 9.b4 a question mark. Even Lipnitsky's conclusion, that White could still maintain equality, did not persuade white players to try this line again. Yet one feels that Black still has problems here, at least after the much-applauded 9...a5 10.b5 ♘a7. However, the position after 9...a5 10.b5 ♘e7 requires further study.

Game 26

Kotov,Alexander
Botvinnik,Mikhail

Leningrad 1939

'The last round came (in the USSR Championship – VB) and there were two leaders. The tournament debutant, Alexander Kotov, who had only recently become a master, had amazed everyone with his play. By the luck of the draw, we were to meet in the decisive game, and the interest in the game was huge. The organiser of the 11th USSR Championship, L. Abramov, recalls that the number of spectators was not exceeded by any of the post-war world championship matches...

Tickets were sold out a day in advance, but people without tickets began to gather around the entrance to the venue. The organisers found a highly original solution to the difficulties – they set up a demonstration board on the bank of the River Moika, opposite the building where the tournament was played. One bank of the river soon filled up with spectators, and then the other bank as well. Public transport was brought to a halt. The weather that evening was unusually warm, and the spectators spent several hours out in the fresh air, excitedly following events in the decisive game.

... In the 1940s and 50s, Alexander Alexandrovich Kotov (1913-1981) was one of the strongest players in the world. He was marked by an excellent positional understanding and good calculation of variations. His cheerful pragmatism and excellent feeling for the attack brought him some great tournament successes.

I spent a lot of time before the game on the question of what opening to play as Black against my then still rather inexperienced opponent. I chose the Ragozin Defence, generally regarded as quite pleasant for White, but which has its own positional subtleties. I thought that the young master (especially one ambitious to become champion of the country!) would strive energetically for a win, without paying too much attention to strict positional principles. And therein lay my hopes of success' – Botvinnik.

'Why did Botvinnik choose the Ragozin Defence, rather than some other opening, giving equal chances? The key point was psychological. The Ragozin Defence was regarded as better for White! When one faces an opening, which has a poor reputation, one feels an obligation to fight to obtain a significant advantage, come what may. But in reality, the variation does not justify this approach, since it is far from being bad. Thus, the white player is liable to start getting nervous, and to lose his objectivity in assessing the position, and make mistakes' – Lipnitsky.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 ♘c6 5.♘f3 d5

'Once Black has played ...♘b8-c6 and ...d7-d5, we have on the board a position from the Ragozin Defence. If he had continued, either now or later, ...d7-d6 and ...e6-e5, Black would be employing the ideas of the Nimzo-Indian Defence' – Botvinnik.

6.e3 0-0 7.a3 ♗xc3+ 8.♕xc3 ♗d7

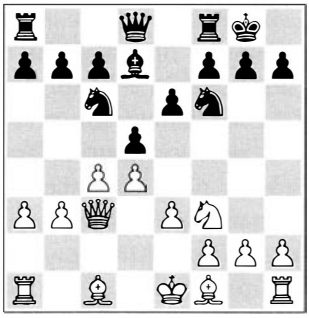
'Black concedes his opponent the advantage of the two bishops and goes into a somewhat cramped position. Why does he do this? Basically in return for quick development. In fact, for Black the opening is already finished, whilst for White that is far from the case. Black is ready for any operations, and White must play very carefully…

The seemingly energetic 8...♘e4 9.♕c2 f5 leads only to a weakening of the dark squares, in view of the absence of the dark-squared bishop' – Botvinnik.

9.b3

This move was recommended by Grigory Levenfish. Its idea is first to complete the development of the queenside, whilst in answer to ...dxc4, White can recapture with the bishop in one move.

After **9.♗d3 a5** (preventing b2-b4) **10.b3** (in the following game, White conceded the square b3 to his opponent without a fight, and Black was able to obtain a comfortable position: 10.0-0 a4 11.♗d2 ♘a5 12.♘e5 dxc4 13.♘xc4 ♘b3 14.♖ad1 (Keres-Kotov, Moscow 1940) 14...♗b5! 15.♕c2 ♗xc4 16.♗xc4 ♘xd2 17.♖xd2 c6⇄) **10...a4!** transposes into a position from the game.

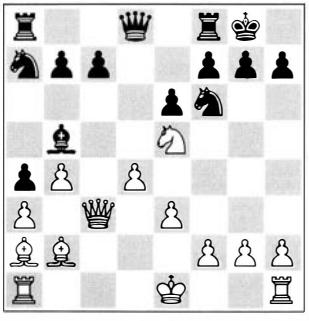


9...a5 10.♗d3

'It turns out that Kotov is not familiar with the subtleties of this variation. After the inevitable ...a5-a4 White does best to reply b3-b4 and then after ...d5xc4 to take with the bishop, without loss of tempo. Therefore, he should have played **10.♗b2**' – Botvinnik.

Let us see how things could develop in that case: **10...a4** 10...♕e7 11.♗d3 ♖fc8 12.0-0 a4 13.b4 dxc4 14.♗xc4 ♘a7 15.♖fe1 ♗b5 16.♗a2 ♗c6 17.♘d2 ♘b5 18.♕c2± Ruzele-Arnason, Moscow 1994. **11.b4 dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♘a7** and now:

A) **13.♘e5 ♗b5 14.♗a2**



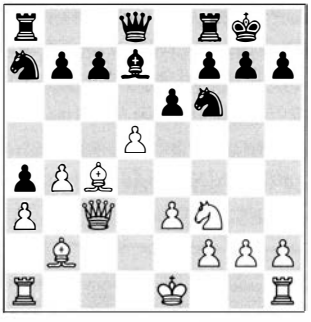
Analysis diagram

'An interesting idea! White avoids the exchange of light-squared bishops even

at the cost of conceding the valuable diagonal a6-f1. In return, his bishop controls the square d5, not allowing the enemy queen to come there, whilst the black bishop at b5 takes that square from his own knight' – Lipnitsky.

Lipnitsky assesses the position in the diagram as clearly more pleasant for White, adding that Capablanca (according to Ragozin) judged the position to be equal. Rybka 4 shares the great Cuban's opinion: **14...♘c8 15.♕c2** (Alatortsev-Romanovsky, Moscow 1945) **15...♘d6!**, and it is very hard for White to carry out the plan indicated by Lipnitsky (f2-f3, ♔f2 followed by the centralisation of the king's rook). For example: 16.f3?! ♘d5 17.♔f2 ♕g5! 18.♖ae1 f6, and Black takes the initiative;

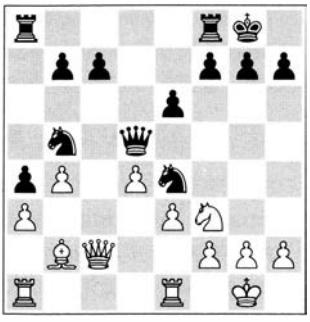
B) The break **13.d5!?** leads to simplification and equal chances:



Analysis diagram

13...exd5 14.♗xd5 ♘b5 15.♕e5 ♖e8 15...c5!? 16.bxc5 ♕a5+ 17.♘d2 ♗c6 18.♗xc6 bxc6 – Black has good compensation for the pawn: he has open lines, and it is hard for White to complete his development. **16.♕g5 c6 17.♗c4 ♘d6 18.0-0-0 ♘de4 19.♗xf6 ♕xf6 20.♕xf6 ♘xf6 21.♔b2 ♗e6 22.♗xe6 ♖xe6** draw, I. Farago-E. Nagy, Budapest 1973;

C) In the following game, White allows his opponent to exchange light-squared bishops, but still obtains better play, thanks to his superiority in the centre: **13.0-0!? ♗b5 14.♖fe1 ♘e4 15.♕c2 ♗xc4 16.♕xc4 ♕d5 17.♕c2 ♘b5**



Analysis diagram

Black has placed his pieces beautifully on light squares, but this blockade is not solid. **18.♘e5 f6 19.♘d3 ♖fe8 20.♖ec1 b6 21.f3 ♘ed6 22.e4 ♕g5 23.♕e2±** Evans-Taimanov, Havana 1964. The black pieces have been driven back and White has a clear advantage. Taimanov eventually made a draw, but only with great effort.

One can conclude that after 10.♗b2! a precise path to equality for Black is not obvious.

10...a4 11.♘d2

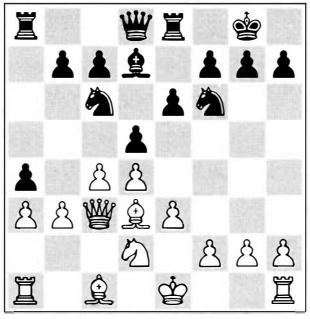
'He already has a choice of evils: 11.b4 leads to the aforementioned loss of tempo, whilst the text move weakens control of e5. I would have preferred the first of these as the lesser evil' – Botvinnik.

Indeed, after 11.b4 dxc4 12.♕xc4 ♘a7 13.♕c2 ♗b5 14.♗b2 White has a solid position, e.g. 14...♕d5 15.0-0 ♗xd3 16.♕xd3 ♘b5 17.♖fc1 c6 18.♖c5 ♕e4⇄ Zagoriansky-Fridstein, Moscow 1945. In addition, Black must be careful

to ensure that his opponent does not break down the light-square blockade.

11...♖e8

Exploiting the fact that his opponent has retreated the knight from the centre, Black immediately prepares the break ...e6-e5.



12.0-0

'Here, my opponent's positional feeling manifested itself at its best. Of course, he had to resist the temptation to prevent the break on the e-file by means of 12.f4. Then there could follow 12...♘a5 13.0-0 (13.b4 dxc4 14.♘xc4 ♘b3 15.♖b1 ♗b5∓ V.B.) 13...axb3 14.♘xb3 ♘xc4 15.♗xc4 dxc4 16.♕xc4 ♗c6, and Black is master of the light squares in the opponent's position' – Botvinnik.

I would add that Black also has another tempting plan: 12...♘g4!? 13.♗e2 ♕h4+ 14.g3 ♕h3, again ruling the light squares.

12...e5

'Black has achieved this standard Ragozin advance without any trouble, and he now has the initiative, which he never relinquishes until the end of the game' – Botvinnik.

13.dxe5?!

'A decision typical of Kotov, who always prefers open play. However, he does not succeed in exploiting the long black diagonal and therefore, being behind in development, it was more cautious to agree to closed play after 13.♗b2 e4' – Botvinnik.

I quote this note from the 1984 edition of the Russian work *Analytical and Critical Works*. Earlier, Botvinnik wrote (and was quoted by Lipnitsky) that 'after 13.♗b2 e4 14.♗e2 ♘a5 Black's advantage is not in doubt, since he forces a splendid base on d5 for his pieces'. As you see, later the 6th World Champion refrained from such a categorical assessment, evidently as a result of further analytical work, which remain hidden behind the scenes. Armed with modern computer technology, we can only agree with Botvinnik's later assessment: after **13.♗e2 e4** it is premature to speak of an undoubted advantage for Black, although he does have a small initiative.

13...♘xe5 14.♗b2

'White already has no time to keep the two bishops. After 14.♗e2 there would follow 14...♘e4 15.♘xe4 dxe4 and then ...♕d8-g5 with an attack' – Botvinnik.



14...axb3

'The time has come to break up the enemy queenside pawns. White again faces a difficult choice. After 15.♕xb3 he was bothered by the fact that there might not be time to occupy d1 with a rook, because of the threat ...♗d7-a4. But this is only a temporary problem. Permitting Black to occupy e4 with his knight means giving him a valuable strategic trump' – Botvinnik.

15.♘xb3

'After 15.♕xb3 there is the very unpleasant 15...♗a4! 16.♕c3 ♘xd3 17.♕xd3 dxc4 18.♕xd8 ♖axd8 19.♘xc4 ♘e4 with a big advantage in the endgame, thanks to the control of the d-file and the extra passed pawn on the queenside' – Botvinnik.

15...♘e4 16.♕c2

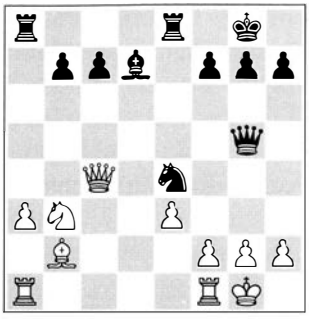
After 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.♖ad1 ♕g5 18.♔h1 ♖a6! Black's threats are extremely dangerous.

16...♘xc4

'Why did Black enter a position with opposite-coloured bishops? In the endgame, this gives greater chances of a draw, but when it is a question of conducting an attack, the important point is that the bishop has no opponent' – Botvinnik.

17.♗xc4 dxc4 18.♕xc4 ♕g5?!

An inaccuracy, thanks to which White could equalise the position. It was stronger first to remove the knight with 18...♘d6, for example: 19.♕c3 ♕g5 20.h4 ♕g6 21.f3 ♘f5 22.h5 ♕g5 23.e4 ♘g3 24.♖f2 ♗a4∓.



19.f4?

Black has created two unpleasant threats: 19...♗b5 and 19...♗h3. To meet these, White drives the queen from its strong position on g5, but in the process, seriously weakens the position of his king and gives himself a backward pawn on e3. Instead, by a small tactical nuance, he could drive the queen away from g5 in a different manner: 19.h4! ♕xh4 20.♕d4. There is a double attack on g7 and the bishop on d7! The knight cannot retreat to f6 because of the pin, so Black has no choice: 20...♕f6 21.♕xe4 ♕xb2 (21...♖xe4? 22.♗xf6 gxf6 23.♘c5 ♖e7 24.♘xb7±) 22.♕xb7. White has restored material equality and Black does not manage to exploit the pin on the knight, because his bishop is also needed in the defence: 22...♗f5 (22...♗e6 23.♘c5) 23.♕b5 c5 24.♖fc1⇄.

19...♕g6 20.♖fd1

White cannot accept the pawn sacrifice by 20.♕xc7 because of the variation pointed out by Botvinnik: 20...♗h3 21.♕c2 ♖ac8 22.♕e2 ♘d6! (threatening 23...♖c2 and 23...♖xe3) 23.♖f2 ♗g4 24.♕e1 ♘e4 25.♖f1 ♖c2, and Black wins.

20...♘d6 21.♕d3

He loses after 21.♕xc7? ♗c6 22.♖d2 ♘c4 (Botvinnik).

21...♗f5 22.♕c3



22...♗e4

The battle could have been ended quickly by 22...♗h3! 23.g3 (the attempt to run into the endgame with 23.♕xg7+ ♕xg7 24.♗xg7 fails because of the intermediate move 24...♗e6) 23...♘f5 24.♕c2 ♖xe3 etc.

23.♖d2 ♗c6 24.♕d3 ♘f5

The ending after 24...♖a4 25.♕xg6 hxg6 26.♖d3 ♘c4 also looks very attractive for Black, but Botvinnik wants to finish the game with a direct attack.

25.♗e5 f6 26.♗xc7 ♖xe3 27.♕c4+ ♔h8 28.♗b6



28...♖ee8

'The move 28...♖e4 looks more active, but it blocks the long diagonal, and the rook would later have to move again, whereas on e8 it solidly defends the back rank' – Botvinnik.

Rybka finds a very nice idea, however: 28...♖ae8!? 29.♗xe3 ♗xg2 30.♖xg2 (after 30.♔f2 ♗c6 31.♖g1 ♕h5 32.♕e2 ♕h4+ Black's attack is irresistible) 30...♕xg2+ 31.♔xg2 ♘xe3+ 32.♔f3 ♘xc4 with an extra pawn in the endgame. Admittedly, though, little material remains, which leaves White some chances.

29.♕f1 h5

Black continues to strengthen his position. It was possible to penetrate on the light squares, but this would have led to numerous exchanges: 29...♘h4 30.♘d4 ♖e3 31.a4 (31.♘xc6? ♘f3+ 32.♔h1 ♘xd2) 31...♖f3 32.♖f2 ♖xf2 33.♕xf2 ♗d5 34.f5 ♕g4 35.h3 ♕xg2+ 36.♕xg2 ♘xg2. The extra pawn is nice, but little material remains on the board, and the opposite-coloured bishops also increase White's drawing chances.

30.♘d4 ♘xd4

'30...♘e3 was insufficient because of 31.♕d3'. This note of Botvinnik's shows that he did not consider the exchange of queens on principle, but was determined to finish the game with a direct attack. In fact, after 31...♕xd3 32.♖xd3 ♘xg2 33.♘xc6 ♘xf4 34.♘b4 ♘xd3 35.♘xd3 ♔h7 Black has good winning chances, although the battle would continue for some time.

31.♗xd4 ♖e4 32.♖e1

'Otherwise after 32...♖ae8 the loss of the e-file would cause White new prob-

lems. Consequently, he is prepared to sacrifice a pawn, to exchange a pair of rooks' – Botvinnik.

32...♖xe1 33.♕xe1 ♖xa3 34.♔h1 ♖a8

The nice move 34...♖f3! would have won another pawn.

35.♖e2 ♔h7 36.h3 ♖e8



37.♕f2?

'It was essential to defend against the threat of 37...♕xg2+ by means of 37.♕d2. But then after the quiet 37...♖d8 38.♕e3 ♕f5 39.♔g1 b5 the win is guaranteed, thanks to the material advantage and the passive position of the enemy pieces. In the game, upset by the unfortunate turn of events, Kotov overlooks the trap. Admittedly, several years later at Groningen 1946, he took some measure of revenge, by catching Guimard in a similar trap. The only difference was that the pin was not on the diagonal, but along the file' – Botvinnik.

37...♕xg2+ 38.♕xg2 ♖xe2

White resigned. A brilliant creative and sporting achievement by Mikhail Moiseevich Botvinnik!

Chapter Three

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕b3



A perfectly logical continuation. White attacks the enemy bishop and at the same time defends the pawn on c4. But the position of the queen also has its downsides: control of d4 is weakened, and in addition, after the enemy knight comes out to c6, there is a potential threat of ...♘c6-a5.

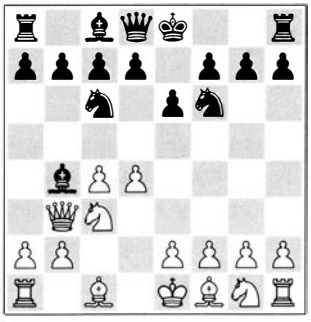
In the diagram position, Black faces a choice between the classical Ragozin move 5...♘c6 and the immediate central blow 5...c5. The second, more modern continuation is considered stronger by current theory. Black wants to force mass exchanges in the centre and develop active piece play, thanks to his advantage in development. The possibility of ending up with an isolated pawn on d5 does not worry him very much; Black will then bring his bishop to e6 and thanks to the threat of ...d5-d4 (attacking the enemy queen) he will win another tempo for the development of his pieces. This line of the Ragozin often arises from the Nimzo-Indian with 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕b3. Admittedly, in order to reach the Ragozin position itself, Black must not only play 4...♘c6 (instead of the most popular move 4...c5), but then follow up with ...d7-d5 – other plans keep the game within the confines of the Nimzo-Indian.

On the whole, Black usually solves his opening problems perfectly satisfactorily. At the moment, this variation occupies a secondary place in theory, although this could change at any moment – I repeat, the queen move to b3 makes sound positional sense. The game Kramnik-Short, played in London 2009, shows that elite players retain definite interest in this scheme of development.

Game 27
Capablanca,José
Ragozin,Viacheslav
Moscow 1936

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕b3 ♘c6

'This system of defence was worked out by Soviet players and was played by them a number of times in the 1935 Moscow tournament. The results of both those, and the present game, show that it is not easy for Black to overcome his opening problems' – Capablanca.



'This move was introduced into practice by me in 1932, during the Leningrad Championship. The aggressive 4...c5 may seem more consequential, but the many games played with this move have seen Black face permanent worries over the backward d-pawn. The clear advantage, which White obtains on the d-file after 4...c5, led me to try the text move.

The move 4...♘c6 firstly pursues a strategy of the most rapid possible development of the pieces, and, secondly, prepares central counterplay with the advance ...e6-e5, which I think is more dangerous to White than the play after 4...c5' – Ragozin.

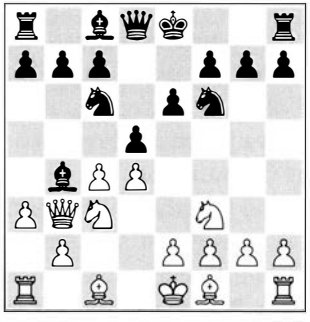
From the position of today, I can add that 4...c5 and 4...♘c6 remain the two main answers to 4.♕b3, but the former is played almost five times more often than the latter.

5.♘f3

5.d5 is not dangerous for Black because of 5...exd5 6.cxd5 ♘d4 7.♕d1 (Dittmann-Bachtiar, Leipzig 1960) 7...♘b5, and after the best reply 8.♕b3 Black can force a draw by repetition of moves (8...♘d4), but in fact, the advantage is already on his side after 8...♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♗a5∓.

5...d5 6.e3

White can also determine the bishop's position at once with **6.a3**.



Analysis diagram

Black then has a choice – to take or to keep the bishop.

A) After the retreat **6...♗e7** we reach a position, similar to the Queen's Gambit, but with the knight on c6. Admittedly, the white queen on b3 is also not ideally placed, since it is constantly vulnerable to a fork on a5. Overall, though, White retains a small opening initiative:

A1) **7.e3 0-0 8.♕c2 a5** 8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♗d6 10.0-0 e5 11.h3 a6 12.♗a2 ♕d7 13.d5 ♘e7 14.♘d2 ♕f5 15.♕xf5 ♗xf5 16.e4 ♗g6⇄ Annakov-Shtern, Dallas 2000. **9.♗d3 dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♗d6 11.0-0 e5 12.h3 h6**

13.♖d1 Worthy of consideration was 13.d5 ♘e7 14.e4±; in this pawn structure, Black does better to have his pawn on a6 than a5. Now the square b5 is in White's hands and he can create unpleasant pressure on the c-file. **13...exd4 14.exd4 ♘e7 15.♘e5 c6 16.♗f4 ♘ed5 17.♘xd5 ♘xd5 18.♗g3 ♗e6⇄** Eingorn-Beliavsky, Odessa 2006 (rapid);

A2) **7.♗g5** 0-0 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♗xe7 ♘cxe7 10.e3 b6 11.♗e2 ♗b7 12.0-0 ♘g6 13.♖ac1 ♖c8 14.♖fd1± Pavlovic-Maksimovic, Kladovo 1991;

A3) **7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗g5** 8.♗f4 0-0 9.e3 a6 10.♗d3 – White is slightly better, but with accurate play, Anand neutralises his opponent's slight initiative – 10...h6 11.0-0 ♗d6 12.♘e5 ♘e7 13.h3 c6 14.♖ac1 ♕c7 15.♘a4 ♗f5 16.♘c5 ♗xd3 17.♘exd3 ♗xf4 18.♘xf4 ♖ab8 19.♕c2 draw, Kramnik-Anand, Monaco 1996 (rapid). **8...0-0 9.e3 ♘a5 10.♕c2 ♗e6 11.♗d3 h6 12.♗f4 ♘c6 13.h3±** Ehlvest-Rozentalis, Groningen 1993. The white pieces are more harmoniously placed, and Black has not yet managed to relocate the knight from c6 and put the pawn on c6 in its place;

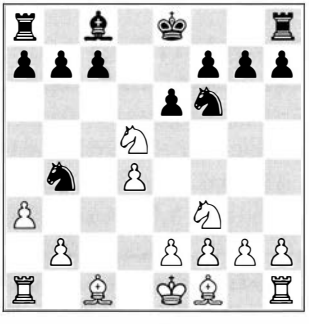
B) **6...dxc4** A perfectly sensible interpolation, since White now has to recapture with the queen. **7.♕xc4**:



Analysis diagram

B1) Spassky once transferred the bishop to b6 here, but there it has little to do. I believe White can then obtain the advantage: **7...♗a5 8.e3 0-0 9.♗e2 ♖e8 10.b4 ♗b6 11.0-0 e5 12.d5** Interesting complications lead to mass exchanges and simplification. At the same time, the pawn on e3 leaves its position and the bishop's position on b6 starts to take on some sense. It was probably simpler to exchange on e5 and then bring the dark-squared bishop onto the long diagonal: 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♖xe5 14.♗b2 ♗e6 15.♕h4±. **12...♘e7 13.♘xe5 ♘exd5 14.♘xf7 ♔xf7 15.e4 ♗e6 16.exd5 ♘xd5 17.♘xd5 ♗xd5 18.♕f4+ ♔g8⇄** Averbakh-Spassky, Leningrad 1960;

B2) Interesting, but insufficient for equality, is **7...♕d5 8.♕xb4** Lipnitsky recommends the straightforward 8.♕d3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3± and considers that White's chances are preferable, because of the unstable position of the queen on d5: White will gradually prepare c4 or e4, bringing his bishops to life. **8...♘xb4 9.♘xd5**



Analysis diagram

9...♘bxd5 Worth considering is 9...♘c2+ 10.♔d1 ♘xa1 11.♘xc7+ ♔e7 12.♘xa8 ♗d7 13.♘b6!? axb6 14.♗g5 ♗a4+ 15.♔d2, and here after 15...♖c8 or 15...♘b3+ the position re-

mains fairly sharp, although the computer promises White a clear advantage. **10.♘e5 ♗d7 11.♘xd7 ♘xd7 12.e4 ♘5f6 13.f3 0-0 14.♗e3 ♘e8 15.♖c1±** Alatortsev-Romanovsky, Moscow 1944. White has a dream position: two bishops and a strong and mobile pawn centre, whilst the enemy knights lack secure posts. Black's opening has clearly not gone well;

B3) **7...♗d6**



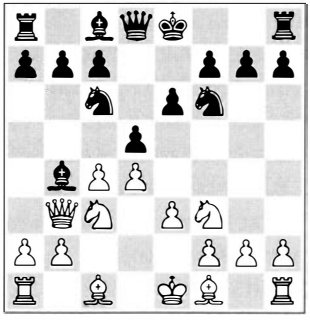
Analysis diagram

The most typical Ragozin move. **8.♗g5 h6 9.♗h4** In my view, more promising is 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.e4, e.g. 10...e5 11.♘d5 ♕d8 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.f4 ♗d6 15.e5 c6 16.exd6 cxd5 17.♕xd5 0-0 18.0-0-0±. **9...g5 10.♗g3 ♗xg3 11.hxg3 g4 12.♘e5 ♕xd4 13.♕xd4 ♘xd4** (Jabali-Van Buskirk, Los Angeles 2001) **14.♖d1 ♘c6** 14...♘c2+!? 15.♔d2 ♘d4 16.e3 ♘c6⇄. **15.♘b5 ♘xe5 16.♘xc7+ ♔e7 17.♘xa8 ♗d7 18.♘c7 a6 19.e3 ♖c8 20.♘xa6 bxa6 21.♗xa6 ♖c2 22.♖d2 ♖c1+ 23.♖d1 ♖c2=**;

C) **6...♗xc3+ 7.bxc3** After 7.♕xc3 we reach a position examined in Chapter Two dealing with 5.♕c2. - **7...0-0 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♗g5 ♘a5 10.♕a4** 10.♕b5 c6 11.♗xf6?! cxb5 12.♗xd8 ♖xd8∓. **10...b6 11.e3 h6 12.♗xf6 ♕xf6** with mutual chances.

The most popular move in this position is **6.♗g5**, which we will examine in the game Eliskases-Fischer.

Back to the game at hand.



6...0-0

For the move **6...a6** see the later game Giffard-Kortchnoi, Banyoles 2006.

7.a3

Harmless for Black is 7.♗d3 dxc4 8.♗xc4 ♗d6 9.♘b5?! (9.♗e2 e5 10.d5 ♘e7⇄) 9...♘a5 10.♕a4 ♘xc4 11.♕xc4 ♗d7 12.0-0 ♗c6 13.♘xd6 cxd6 14.♗d2 ♘e4 15.♖fc1 ♕f6∓ Stahlberg-Keres, Gothenburg 1938.

7...dxc4

7...♗e7 – see 6.a3 ♗e7 7.e3 0-0.

8.♗xc4

After **8.♕xc4** Black advances ...e6-e5 and obtains satisfactory play: 8...♗d6 9.♗e2 e5 10.d5 ♘e7 11.e4 a6 12.0-0 ♘g6 13.g3 h6 14.♔g2 ♕d7 15.♘g1 b5 16.♕d3 ♗b7⇄ Kotanjian-Meister, Tula 2001.

8...♗d6 9.♗b5

'With this move, Capablanca apparently prevents the planned ...e6-e5 and strengthens the threat of e3-e4. In the

game Kmoch-Levenfish, Leningrad 1934, White played 9.♗e2, after which 9...e5 equalised easily' – Ragozin.



9...e5

'With this move, Black sacrifices a pawn, hoping to obtain an attack. White's basic threat is e3-e4, which Black tries to prevent first of all. It seems to me that this pawn sacrifice had been the subject of detailed analysis, but in this game, it did not prove justified. After the normal continuation 9...♕e7 10.♗xc6 bxc6 11.e4 e5 White's position deserves preference' – Capablanca.

Ragozin, however, awards Black's 9th move an exclamation mark and writes: 'An interesting and fully justified pawn sacrifice! The incomparable chess genius Paul Morphy showed the strength of space for the better developed side. Open lines and greater freedom for his pieces – these are what Black obtains with this pawn sacrifice. After the game, several of the players, including Capablanca, suggested that I had prepared this move at home. I would like to take the opportunity to scotch these rumours. This position and others like it (i.e. with the white bishop on b5) have not been seen before this game, either in my tournament practice nor in my thoughts. If this had not been the case, the result of the game might have been different.'

10.♗xc6

After 10.d5 ♘e7 11.e4 c6 12.dxc6 ♘xc6⇄ Black is not worse, at least.

10...exd4



11.♘xd4

Despite the fact that Capablanca won this game convincingly, his plan has not stood the test of time. In several later games, Black did not experience difficulties:

A) **11.♘e4** bxc6 12.♘xd6 cxd6 13.♘xd4 c5 14.♘e2 ♗a6 15.f3 ♖e8 16.♔f2 ♖b8 17.♕c2 ♕b6∓ Dunkelblum-Carleton, Birmingham 1972;

B) **11.♗b5** dxc3 12.♕xc3 ♗f5 13.♗d3 ♕d7 14.♗d2 ♖fe8 15.h3 ♖ad8 16.♗xf5 ♕xf5∓ Gelpke-Rebers, Netherlands 1994/95;

C) **11.exd4** bxc6 12.0-0 ♗g4 13.♘e5 c5 14.♗g5 ♗e6 15.d5 ♗xd5 16.♘xd5 ♗xe5 17.♖ad1 ♕b8 18.♘e7+ ♔h8 19.♕xb8 ♖axb8⇄ Trifunovic-Barcza, Sofia 1947.

11...bxc6 12.♘xc6

'Capablanca bravely takes the pawn. On the one hand, this underlines his real

understanding of the position, and the fact that it will be hard for Black to exploit his small positional advantage. On the other hand, taking the pawn is also the best practical chance, since if 12.0-0, then 12...c5 13.♘f3 ♗g4, and Black starts an attack, without White even having a pawn by way of compensation, as is the case in the game' – Ragozin.

12...♕d7

'12...♕e8 was possible, but Black wishes to attack and therefore keeps the possibility of ♕g4' – Capablanca.

13.♘d4



13...♕g4?!

Capablanca criticised this move, whereas Ragozin awarded it an exclamation mark and called it 'a direct and strong attacking manoeuvre'. It seems as though the Cuban genius was nearer the truth, in suggesting instead **13...♗a6**. Indeed, after 14.♕a4 ♕c8 15.f3 (both 15.♘db5 ♗e5, and 15.b4 c5 16.bxc5 ♗xc5 17.♘de2 ♗d6 are weaker) 15...♖e8 16.♔f2 c5 17.♘db5 ♗e5 Black has good compensation for the sacrificed pawn. But even stronger, it seems, was **13...c5!** 14.♘de2 ♖b8 15.♕a4 ♕c7 16.h3 ♗e6∓, and it is very difficult for White to complete his development.

14.0-0 ♗a6?

Ragozin overlooks the ex-World Champion's strong intermediate move. Black should have played **14...c5!**, e.g. 15.♘f3 ♕h5 16.♖d1 ♖d8⩲.

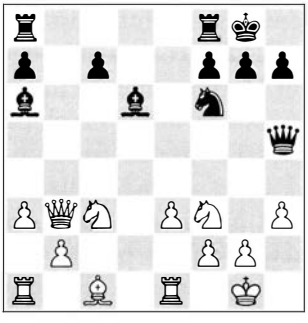
15.h3!

It seems that Black had counted on the beautiful variation 15.♖d1? ♗xh2+! 16.♔xh2 ♕h4+ 17.♔g1 ♘g4 18.♘f3 ♕xf2+ 19.♔h1 ♗f1 with a winning attack.

15...♕h4

'Somewhat belatedly, Black acknowledges his mistake. With his last move, he forces ♘f3, so as later to gain a tempo when he brings the bishop to c8 (threatening ...♗xh3) to attack the kingside' – Ragozin.
After 15...♕g6 16.♖d1 ♖fe8 17.♕c2± White stabilises the position, retaining his material advantage.

16.♘f3 ♕h5 17.♖e1



17...♖ab8

Ragozin recommended 17...♗c8 with the threat of ...♗xh3, and now after 18.♕d1 there is the unpleasant

18...♖e8. Probably, White should return the pawn, forcing transition into a favourable endgame: 18.♕b5! ♕g6 19.e4 ♗xh3 20.♕g5 ♗g4 21.e5 ♗xf3 22.♕xg6 fxg6! (22...hxg6 23.gxf3 ♖ae8 24.♗f4 ♘h5 25.exd6 ♘xf4 26.dxc7+−) 23.gxf3 ♖ae8 24.f4 (with the f-file open, 24.♗f4 is not so dangerous, although here too, White retains the advantage: 24...♘h5 25.exd6 ♘xf4 26.dxc7 ♖c8 27.♖e7 ♖f7±) 24...♗c5 25.♗e3 ♗xe3 26.fxe3±.

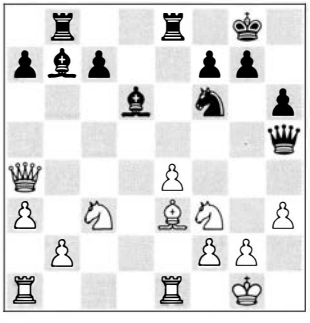
18.♕a4 ♗b7 19.e4

'Now it is clear how badly the black pieces are placed – there is a threat of ♗g5, and the a7 pawn needs defending' – Ragozin.

19...h6

'Necessary, because of the threat of 20.♗g5. However, the fact that the attack has to be conducted by means of such a move speaks against its strength' – Capablanca.

20.♗e3 ♖fe8



21.♗d4!

'A very strong move, finally liquidating all Black's threats. If now 21...♘xe4, then 22.♗xa7 and ♘xe4, whilst if 21...♗xe4, then after 22.♗xf6 Black loses a piece' – Capablanca.

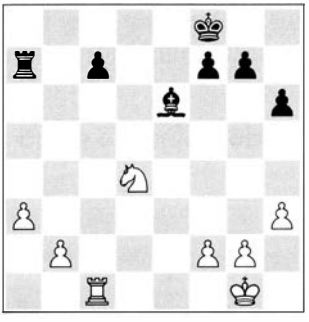
21...♘h7 22.♗xa7

'Having completed his development and strengthened the position of his pieces, Capablanca forces transition into an endgame with an extra pawn' – Ragozin.

22...♖a8 23.♕b5 ♕xb5 24.♘xb5 ♖xe4 25.♖xe4 ♗xe4 26.♘d2 ♗d3 27.♘xd6 ♖xa7

'Black prefers to seek his chances in this endgame, because in the opposite-coloured bishop ending arising after 27...cxd6, White has two connected passed pawns' – Capablanca.

28.♘6e4 ♘f8 29.♘c5 ♗f5 30.♘f3 ♘e6 31.♖c1 ♔f8 32.♘xe6+ ♗xe6 33.♘d4



'White's plan is first to prevent the advance of the c-pawn (which could leave the b-pawn weak), and control the whole board up to the 5th rank. This is achieved by placing the king on e3, the rook on c3, the knight on d4 and the pawns on b4 and f4. Having achieved such a position, White will arrange the advance of his queenside pawns' – Capablanca.

33...♖b7 34.b4 ♗d7 35.f4 ♔e7 36.♔f2 ♖a7 37.♖c3 ♔d6 38.♖d3 ♔e7 39.♔e3 ♖a4 40.♖c3

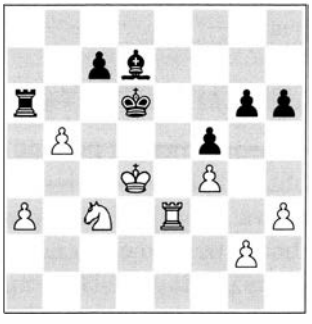
'A very interesting line was 40.♔e4 c5 41.bxc5 ♗c6+ 42.♔e5 f6+ 43.♔f5 ♗xg2, and it is hard to find a sufficiently strong continuation for White' – Capablanca.

The continuation 44.♔g6! ♗e4+ 45.♘f5+ ♔e8 46.♖d2 seems fairly unpleasant for Black, retaining winning chances, but Capablanca, of course, is absolutely right, that there was no need to enter such complications. He repeats moves, gaining time, and quietly continues to strengthen his position.

40...♔d6 41.♖d3 ♔e7 42.♖c3 ♔d6 43.♘e2 g6 44.♖d3+ ♔e6 45.♔d4 ♖a6 46.♖e3+

'Despite White's extra pawn, the endgame requires very accurate play from him. His last move was played so as to drive the enemy king away from f6 or prevent a check from d6' – Capablanca.

46...♔d6 47.♘c3 f5 48.b5



48...♖a8

'White now begins the second part of his plan: the advance of his queenside pawns. If 48...♖xa3, then 49.♘e4+ fxe4 50.♖xa3 ♗xb5 51.♖g3 c5+ 52.♔xe4 ♗c6+ 53.♔d3, and White should win' – Capablanca.

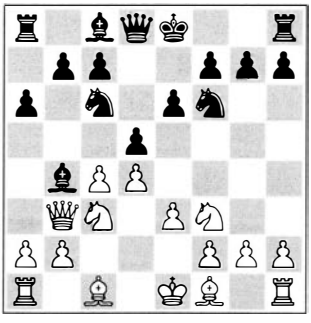
49.♔c4 ♗e6+ 50.♔b4 c5+ 51.bxc6 ♗g8 52.♘b5+ ♔xc6 53.♖d3 g5 54.♖d6+ ♔b7 55.fxg5! hxg5 56.♖g6 ♖f8 57.♖xg5 f4 58.♘d4

'Capablanca has conducted the whole endgame not only very accurately, but without giving his opponent the least counterplay. Now it was possible to play more aggressively with 58.a4, but White preferred to prevent f3' – Ragozin.

58...♖c8 59.♖g7+ ♔b6 60.♖g6+ ♔b7 61.♘b5 ♖f8 62.♘d6+ ♔b8 63.h4 1-0

Game 28
Giffard,Nicolas
Kortchnoi,Viktor
Banyoles 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕b3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 d5 6.e3 a6!?



This may be the most accurate path to equality. Black defers castling for a while, but in return, completely cuts off White's play with ♗b5 or ♘b5.

7.a3 dxc4 8.♗xc4 ♗d6 9.♕c2

Retreating the queen does not pose the opponent any problems. More principled is **9.e4**, after which Black had apparently prepared **9...b5 10.♗d3** (the

piece sacrifice 10.♘xb5? fails because of 10...axb5 11.♗xb5 ♗d7 12.e5 ♗b4+! 13.♔f1 ♘d5) **10...e5 11.d5 ♘e7 12.♗g5 c5!?** with mutual chances.

9...e5

It was also possible to postpone this advance by a few moves, since White cannot prevent it anyway: **9...0-0** 10.♘g5 h6 11.♘ge4 ♘xe4 12.♘xe4 e5 13.♘xd6 cxd6 14.d5 ♘e7 15.0-0 b5 16.♗d3 f5 17.e4 fxe4 18.♗xe4 ♗f5 19.♗xf5 ♘xf5⇄ Gonzalez Garcia-Vehi Bach, Barbera 2009.

10.d5 ♘e7 11.h3 b5 12.♗a2 ♗b7 13.e4 0-0

Equality results from **13...c6 14.dxc6 ♘xc6 15.♗e3 0-0 16.0-0 ♖c8**. Probably Kortchnoi was playing for a win and did not like the fact that it would be harder to outplay White in the symmetrical position, hence he prefers a less accurate plan.

14.♗g5 ♘d7 15.♖d1 h6 16.♗c1

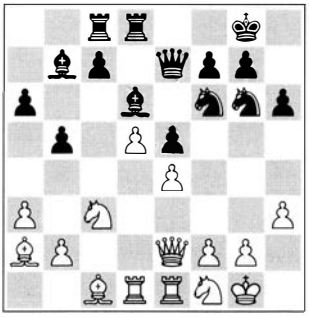
White plays extremely solidly, retreating his bishop to the back rank, so it will not come under attack from the enemy pawns and pieces.

16...♖c8 17.0-0 ♘f6 18.♕e2

Another prophylactic move: now the queen will not be opposite the enemy rook, when the c-file is opened.

18...♘g6 19.♖fe1 ♕e7 20.♘h2 ♖fd8 21.♘f1

As solid as a rock; the knight heads for e3, further reinforcing the d5 pawn and threatening to jump into f5. I think at this point, Viktor Lvovich realised that he was not going to be able to get a full-blooded struggle in this game.



21...c6 22.♘e3 cxd5 23.♘exd5 ♘xd5 24.♘xd5 ♗xd5 25.♗xd5 ♗c5 26.♖d3 ♔h7 27.g3 ♘f8 28.♖ed1 ♘e6 29.♗xe6

Draw agreed. In order not to lose a piece, Black must recapture with the pawn, and then the superior pawn structure will assure White a minimal (moral) advantage.

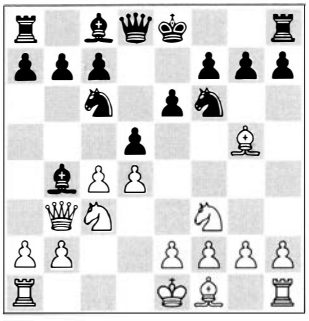
But as we have seen, on that day, the French player of White was not in an aggressive mood.

Game 29
Eliskases,Erich
Fischer,Robert
Buenos Aires 1960

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.d4 ♗b4 5.♕b3

'Ever since his youth in the 1930s, Eliskases was known as a subtle positional player. After his emigration to Argentina in 1939, he added extreme solidity to his reputation, and was almost always satisfied with a draw in games against very strong players. The text move is very solid – White defends the c4-pawn and the pinned knight, and also prevents the complications which could arise after 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.♗g5 dxc4' – Mednis.

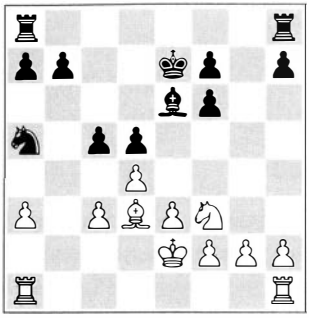
5...♘c6 6.♗g5



The most popular move. Exploiting the fact that the enemy dark-squared bishop is a long way from the kingside, White pins the knight on f6 and thereby strengthens the pressure against d5.

6...h6

Probably Black can gradually equalise with Lipnitsky's suggestion of **6...dxc4 7.♕xc4 ♕d5!?** Black immediately begins a fight in the centre, not being afraid to spoil his pawn structure. Less convincing is 7...h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.g3 0-0 10.♗g2 ♗d6 11.0-0 a6 12.♖ac1 ♗d7 13.♘e4 ♕e7 14.♘c5 ♗xc5 15.♕xc5 ♖fe8 16.a3± Eliskases-Borja, Munich 1958. **8.♕xd5** After 8.♕d3 Black has the strong retort 8...♘e4!, e.g. 9.♗d2 ♗xc3 10.♗xc3 b6 11.g3 (Ehrnrooth-Carleton, corr. 1995) 11...♗b7 12.♗g2 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 – not 13.♕xc3? ♘xd4!, so White must close the c-file – 13...0-0 14.0-0 ♘a5⇄. **8...exd5** Weaker is 8...♘xd5 9.♗d2 0-0 10.♖c1 ♖d8 11.e3 ♗d7 12.♘xd5 ♗xd2+ 13.♔xd2 exd5 14.♖c5± Hertneck-Zysk, Germany Bundesliga 1985/86. **9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♗e6 12.e3 ♘a5 13.♗d3 c5 14.♔e2 ♔e7**



Analysis diagram

'The practical chances of the two sides are equal. It is not easy to exploit the weakness of the black kingside pawns and this is compensated for by his active play, the centralised position of his king (the square d6) and queenside pawn majority' – Lipnitsky.

This assessment is not unarguable, but nobody has been found who is willing to uphold or refute it. In general, this analysis of Lipnitsky's has simply been forgotten.

7.♗xf6

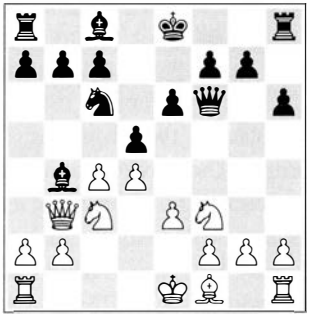
After **7.♗h4?** g5 8.♗g3 g4 9.♘e5 ♘xd4 White loses a pawn.

Alatortsev's idea **7.♗d2** is interesting. White hopes to exploit the position of the h6 pawn as something to bite on for a kingside attack, and plans to take his own monarch to the queenside. The game could continue: **7...0-0** The standard reaction 7...dxc4 8.♕xc4 0-0 9.a3 ♗d6 10.e4 e5⇄ is worth considering. **8.e3 ♖e8 9.0-0-0** Not dangerous for Black is 9.♖c1 a6 10.a3 ♗f8 11.♕c2 dxc4 12.♗xc4 e5 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♖xe5⇄ Glienke-Soffer, Balatonbereny 1997. **9...♗f8 10.♖g1 ♗d7** It seems that even stronger is 10...♘a5! 11.♕a4 ♘xc4 12.♗xc4 dxc4 13.♕xc4 a6∓, and Black outstrips his opponent in developing his initiative.

11.g4 ♘e4 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♘e1 a5 14.a3 ♘b4 15.♔b1 c5⇄ Alatortsev-Ragozin, Leningrad 1932.

7...♕xf6 8.e3

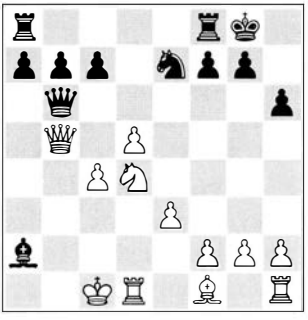
White cannot flick in the exchange on d5, since after **8.cxd5** there follows **8...♘xd4 9.♘xd4 ♕xd4** with an equal game, e.g. 10.♖d1 ♕c5 (or 10...♕b6 11.a3 ♗xc3+ 12.♕xc3 0-0 13.e3 exd5 14.♖xd5 ♗e6 15.♖b5 ♕d6⇄ I.Rabinovich-Ragozin, Tbilisi 1937) 11.e3 0-0 12.a3 ♗xc3+ 13.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 14.bxc3 exd5 15.♖xd5 ♗e6 16.♖c5 c6 17.♗c4 ♖fe8 18.♔e2 ♖ad8 19.♗xe6 draw, Khismatullin-Lastin, St. Petersburg 2009.



8...dxc4

With the move **8...0-0** Black can offer a pawn sacrifice. Lipnitsky considers it rather risky for Black, and Fischer indirectly confirms this view, by preferring 8...dxc4. Even so, one has the impression that with accurate play, Black can hold the balance here.

Let us look at this idea in more detail: **9.cxd5 exd5 10.♕xd5** In the following game, White first brought out the bishop with 10.♗b5!? and only after 10...♗d6 took the pawn – 11.♕xd5. Black's initiative proved insufficient for the sacrificed pawn: 11...♘b4 12.♕b3 ♕g6 (12...♗e6!?) 13.0-0 ♗g4 14.♗e2 ♖ae8 15.♘b5± Minev-Padevsky, Sofia 1958. **10...♗e6!?** After 10...♖e8 11.♗e2 g5!? 12.0-0 g4 13.♘d2 ♘xd4 Black regained the pawn, but did not achieve full equality: 14.exd4 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♖xe2 16.♘e4 ♕e7 17.♘g3± Euwe-Szabo, Hastings 1949/50. **11.♕b5** The idea of this move is to return the queen to the defence as soon as possible. **11...♕g6** So as to prevent the opponent from preparing kingside castling. **12.0-0-0 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♗xa2** Taking a risk, but it seems that the bishop cannot be trapped. **14.d5 ♘e7 15.c4 ♕b6 16.♘d4** (Jo. Horvath-Bokros, Budapest 2001)



Analysis diagram

16...c5! 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♕xb6 axb6 19.♔b2 c5 20.♘b5 ♖a4 21.♖a1 21.♘c3? ♖b4+ 22.♔xa2 ♖a8+. **21...♖d8⇄**

If our conclusion is correct and Black can equalise here, then this pawn sacrifice is how he should play, because after 8...dxc4 White retains an opening initiative.

The standard plan of seizing space on the queenside allows White to obtain the more promising position: **8...a5** 9.a3 a4 10.♕c2 ♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 0-0 12.♗e2 ♗d7 13.0-0 ♖fc8 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♖ac1 ♗g4 16.h3 ♗h5 17.b4 ♘e7 18.♕d2± Luch-Labuckas, Panevezys 2007.

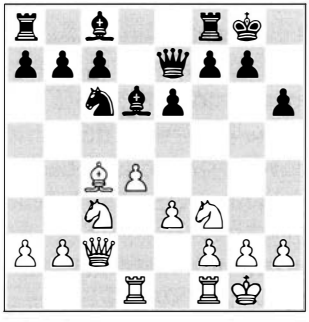
9.♗xc4 0-0 10.0-0 ♕e7

Maybe **10...♗d6** is more accurate, but in this case, White retains some slight pressure: **11.♘e4** Nor does Black fully equalise after various other continuations: 11.♗b5 ♗d7 12.♖fd1 a6 13.♗e2 ♖ab8 14.♖ac1 ♖fc8 15.♘e4 ♕e7 16.♘c5 ♗e8 17.♕c3± Akopian-Serper, Manila 1992; 11.♗d3 e5 12.d5 ♘b8 13.♖ac1 ♕e7 14.♘d2 ♘d7 15.♘de4 ♘c5 16.♘xc5 ♗xc5 17.♖c2 ♔h8 18.♕c4 ♗d7 19.♘a4 ♗d6 20.♘c5± Wang Yue-Zhou Weiqi, Shandong 2007. **11...♕e7 12.♕c3 e5 13.♘xd6 cxd6 14.♗d5 ♖e8 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.dxe5 dxe5 17.♖ac1**± Van Wely-Sosonko, Amsterdam 1994.

11.♕c2

Black deftly regrouped his forces after **11.♗b5** ♗d7 12.♗xc6 ♗xc6 13.♘e5 ♗e8 14.a3 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 b6 16.a4 f6 17.♘d3 ♗g6 18.♖fd1 ♖fd8⇄ Yermolinsky-Milovanovic, Dallas 2000. Worth consideration is **11.♗d3 ♗d6 12.♖ac1**±.

11...♗d6 12.♖ad1



12...♔h8

After the immediate **12...e5** Lipnitsky and Mednis both point out the following striking variation: **13.♘d5** ♕e8? 14.♘f6+!! gxf6 15.♕g6+ ♔h8 16.♕xh6+ ♔g8 17.♕g6+ ♔h8 18.♕xf6+ ♔g8 19.♘g5 winning. However, it is stronger to retreat the queen to d8, since after **13...♕d8 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♗xe5⇄** White has no way to exploit the opposition of rook and queen (after 16.♘b6? there is 16...♗xh2+). Black is close to equality.

13.a3 e5 14.♘d5 ♕e8 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♘xe5 ♕xe5 17.f4



'Despite Black's two bishops, White, who controls the centre, has a small positional advantage. However, neither side has any real weaknesses and with sensible play, the game should end in a draw' – Mednis.

17...♕e8 18.e4 c6 19.♘c3 ♗c7 20.♕e2 ♗e6 21.e5 ♕e7 22.♘e4 ♖ad8 23.♔h1 ♖fe8 24.♗xe6 ♕xe6 25.♘c5 ♕c8 26.♕h5

More aggressive is 26.b4 or 26.♕c4, but Mednis was probably right – in a game with a young genius, Eliskases is perfectly satisfied with a draw.

26...♖xd1 27.♖xd1 ♖d8 28.h3 ♔g8 29.♖xd8+

'The game would have ended in a draw at any move up to 41.♘c8, if Fischer had offered one. He continues to play for a win, which although it is not dangerous in itself, is pointless from a prac-

tical viewpoint, because the position is so static and even that there is nothing either side can undertake' – Mednis.

29...♕xd8 30.e6



30...♕e7!

One can only admire Fischer's determination to win. After the exchange on e6, White would give up knight for bishop, with perpetual check.

31.♕f5!

Eliskases plays very confidently, continually finding the strongest moves. After 31.exf7+ ♕xf7 32.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 33.♘xb7 ♔e6! Black, by sacrificing a pawn, would sharply activate his king and obtain good winning chances.

31...b6 32.exf7+ ♕xf7 33.♕c8+ ♔h7 34.♘e6 ♗d6

Black covers the f8-square, because after 34...♗xf4 35.♘f8+ ♔g8 36.♘e6+ White could give perpetual. 'This prospect horrifies Bobby' – Mednis.

35.g4 ♕f6 36.♕d7 ♕e7

Continuing the fruitless search for winning chances. Probably it was time to agree a draw: 36...♗xf4 37.♘xf4 ♕xf4 38.♕xc6 ♕f1+ 39.♔h2 ♕e2+ 40.♕g2.

37.♕xe7 ♗xe7 38.♘d4 c5

The assessment is not changed by 38...♗d6 39.♘xc6 ♗xf4 40.a4 a6 41.♔g2 ♗d6=.

39.♘c6 ♗d6 40.♘xa7 c4

'On the last move of the time-control, Bobby makes one last attempt to win. Of course, 40...♗xf4 was also possible' – Mednis.

41.♘c8!

'This best, if obvious move, was sealed. Usually, adjourned games are played on the following morning, or on a special day set aside. In Buenos Aires, there was only a 90-minute dinner break before resumption. The idea may seem sensible at first sight, but who can enjoy a quiet dinner, when they have to analyse an important adjourned position?' – Mednis.

41...♗c5??

'This move, made straight after the resumption, is totally inexplicable from a chess point of view. It was time to secure the draw with 41...♗xa3! 42.♘xb6 (not 42.bxa3?? c3, and the pawn promotes) 42...♗xb2 43.♘xc4 ♗c1 44.f5 h5! with an easy theoretical draw, since Black exchanges off all his pawns' – Mednis.



42.a4!

'Now White keeps an extra pawn. Although Eliskases was not prepared for this position, because in his wildest dreams he could never have expected 41...♗c5??, being an excellent endgame player, he now conducts the game to victory in a subtle and instructive manner' – Mednis.

42...♔g6

After 42...♗d4, there would of course follow 43.♘d6.

43.♔g2 ♔f6 44.♔f3 ♔e6 45.♔e4 ♗f2

'In his hasty home analysis, Fischer had hoped to trap the knight by means of 45...b5 46.axb5 ♔d7, and only now saw that White then has the winning move 47.♔d5! – an extraordinary mistake for a world championship candidate!' – Mednis.

46.f5+ ♔d7 47.♘a7 ♔d6 48.♘b5+ ♔c5 49.♘c7!

Now Black has to worry about his g7 pawn and ensure that the f5 pawn does not promote. His counterplay on the queenside is too late.

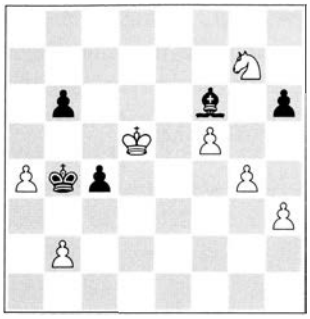
49...♗h4 50.♘e8 ♔b4

The pawn ending after 50...♗f6 51.♘xf6 gxf6 52.h4 is absolutely hopeless.

51.♔d5!

An accurate move; White does not allow his opponent to win the a4 pawn for nothing.

51...♗e7 52.♘xg7 ♗f6



53.♘e8

White is also winning after 53.♘e6 ♗xb2 54.h4 ♗h8 (54...c3 55.♘d4) 55.g5 c3 56.f6 c2 57.f7 c1♕ 58.f8♕+ ♔xa4 59.♕xh8.

53...♗xb2 54.f6 ♗xf6

Nor does 54...c3 55.f7 c2 56.f8♕+ ♔xa4 57.♕f4+ ♔a3 58.♕xh6 c1♕ 59.♕xc1 ♗xc1 60.♘d6 save the game.

55.♘xf6 c3 56.♘h5!

The final subtlety, thanks to which the knight manages to catch the passed pawn.

56...♔xa4

Or 56...c2 57.♘f4 ♔c3 58.♔e4 c1♘!? 59.h4 ♘b3 60.♘d5+ ♔c4 61.♘xb6+ winning.

57.♘f4 b5 58.♘e2 c2



As Mednis observes, here the game was adjourned a second time, and Fischer resigned without waiting for the resumption. Here is one winning path: 59.h4 b4 (59...♔a3 60.♔d4 ♔b2 61.♔c5) 60.♔c4 b3 61.♔c3 ♔a3 62.g5 hxg5 63.hxg5 c1♕+ (63...♔a2 64.♘c1+) 64.♘xc1 b2 65.♔c2, and the black pawns are stopped.

Game 30
Kramnik,Vladimir
Short,Nigel
London 2009

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♘f6 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕b3 c5



In his 1956 book, Lipnitsky wrote: 'Not seen in practice, but perfectly possible is 5...c5'. In fact, US champion Frank Marshall played the move as far back as 1923, and subsequently. That is how 'rapidly' information got round in those days!

The text is perfectly logical and it is no accident that it was regarded as the main line for many years. It strikes another blow at the enemy pawn centre, so as to open the position and develop the initiative, thanks to his lead in development. Often in this variation, Black ends up with an isolated pawn on d5, but this does not greatly bother him; he puts his bishop on e6, and by creating the threat of ...d5-d4, attacking the queen, he gains another tempo.

6.cxd5

The main alternative is **6.dxc5**, which we will examine in the game Akobian-Krush. For now, we will take a brief look at the other white alternatives:

After **6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.♕xc3** Black has a pleasant choice.



Analysis diagram

He can force mass exchanges after **7...♘e4 8.♕c2 ♕a5+**, e.g. 9.♗d2 ♘xd2 10.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 11.♔xd2 dxc4 12.e3 cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♗d7 14.♗xc4 ♘c6 15.♘xc6 draw, Vavrak-Gonda, Olbia 2008, or try to play for the initiative: **7...cxd4 8.♘xd4 e5 9.♘f3 d4 10.♕c2 ♘c6 11.e3 0-0∓** Arzhenkov-Orekhov, Lesnoy Gorodok 2009.

The move **6.♗g5** usually leads to positions examined in Chapter Six. Admittedly, Black can give play an original character by immediately strengthening the pressure against d4: **6...♘c6** 6...h6 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 is examined in Chapter Six. **7.e3** 7.dxc5 h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 – this line will also be examined in Chapter Six. **7...0-0 8.cxd5 exd5 9.dxc5 ♗e6**



Analysis diagram

This is an important position for understanding the whole variation. As I have already said, Black is not bothered by the appearance of an isolated pawn on d5, and with his last move, he has created the threat of ...d5-d4.

10.♘d4 ♗xc5 Black has regained his pawn and, by strengthening the pressure against d4, he forces White to change the pawn structure in the centre:

A) In the following game, the attempt to hold the d4-square led to White coming under attack: **11.♖d1 h6 12.♗h4 ♗g4!** White suffers from an elementary lack of development. If he now plays 13.♗e2, then Black exchanges knights and opens the e-file, which the white king has not yet managed to leave. White does not wish to allow this, so he must weaken the e3 pawn. **13.f3 ♖e8! 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.fxg4 g5 16.♗e2?** Practically capitulating. Good or bad, White had to retreat the bishop to g3; Black's attack would have been very strong, but White would at least have had an extra piece. **16...gxh4 17.0-0 ♖xe3 18.♔h1 ♕d6** – Black has an extra pawn and a superior position, Gagunashvili-Jobava, Warsaw 2005;

B) **11.♘xe6** fxe6 12.♗e2 ♗b4 13.0-0 ♕b6 14.♗h4 ♖ac8 15.♖ab1 ♘a5 16.♕a4 ♘c4⇄ Kortchnoi-Dizdar, Berlin 1985. Black has obtained good counterplay on the queenside with a stable central position.

Back to the game.

6...exd5



7.dxc5

7.♗g5 is also played here, after which Black can either force the exchange on f6 and transpose into lines from Chapter Six (7...h6 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6) or immediately fight for the d4-square: 7...♘c6 8.a3 c4 9.♕c2 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 (10.♕xc3 0-0 11.♘e5 ♕d6 12.♗xf6 ♕xf6 13.e3 ♖e8 14.♘xc6 bxc6∓ Tsekouras-Simeonidis, Kallithea 2006) 10...h6 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.g3 0-0 13.♗g2 ♖e8⇄ Krush-Ehlvest, New York 2003.

7...♘c6

Black defends the bishop, at the same time continuing his development. The pawn on c5 can always be regained.

8.♗g5

Unquestionably the square for the bishop. Other continuations do not give Black any particular problems:

A) **8.e3 0-0 9.♗e2 ♗e6 10.♘d4 ♗xc5** We have already seen similar situations in the games Kortchnoi-Dizdar

and Gagunashvili-Jobava: White blockades the d5 pawn and Black responds by pressurising the square d4. **11.♘xe6 fxe6 12.0-0** After 12.♕xb7? ♘b4 White loses either the queen or the rook on a1. **12...♕e7 13.♗d2 ♔h8 14.♖ad1 a6 15.a3 ♖ad8 16.♗c1 ♗a7⇄** Karpov-Kramnik, Monaco 1997 (rapid). It is hard for the white bishop pair to make itself felt, and the black pawn centre can hardly be broken down;

B) And here is the stem game of the whole variation: **8.♗d2**



Analysis diagram

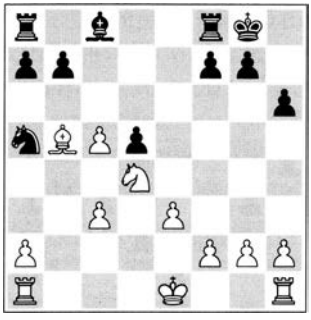
8...♗e6 This move is tempting, but the more aggressive line is also worth consideration: 8...d4!? 9.♘e4 ♘xe4 10.♗xb4 ♗e6 11.♕a4 0-0?. **9.♘g5 0-0 10.e3 ♘d7 11.♘xe6 fxe6 12.♗b5?** Here the bishop comes under attack from the knight at d4; better is 12.♗e2 ♘xc5 13.♕d1=. **12...♘xc5 13.♕d1 d4! 14.exd4 ♘xd4 15.♗c4 ♕h4∓** Kupchik-Marshall, Lake Hopatcong 1923.

8...♗e6

A) **8...0-0 9.0-0-0** Interesting complications arise after 9.a3 ♗xc5 10.e3 d4. We will give a few more moves without commentary: 11.♖d1 ♕e8 12.♗xf6 dxe3∞ Rusev-Luther, Bad Wörishofen 2010; 9.e3 ♗e6 – see 6.♗g5 ♘c6 7.e3. **9...♗xc3 10.♕xc3 ♘e4 11.♗xd8 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♖xd8 13.♘d4** A familiar situation – Black does not have full compensation for the pawn. **13...♘e5 14.e3 ♗d7 15.♗e2 ♖dc8 16.♘b3 ♗e6 17.♗f3 ♘xf3 18.gxf3 a5 19.♔d2 a4 20.♘d4 ♖xc5 21.♖b1±** E. Levin-Alexandrov, Rijeka 2010.

B) **8...h6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.e3**:

B1) After **10...0-0 11.♗b5** it turns out that it is not so easy for Black to re-establish material equality: **11...♗xc3+ 12.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♘a5 14.♘d4**



Analysis diagram

The pawns on c3 and c5 may be doubled, but one of them is extra. It is also important that the d5 pawn is weak, and is on the same colour square as its own bishop. We will give two quite recent games, in which this position arose. In one of them, Black did manage to equalise, in the other not.

B11) **14...a6** 15.♗e2 ♗e6 16.♘b3 ♘c6 17.0-0-0 a5 18.a4 ♖ac8 19.♗b5 ♘a7 20.♗e2 ♘c6 21.♔b2 ♘e5 22.♗b5± Mamedyarov-Can, Bursa 2010;

B12) **14...♗e6** 15.♘b3 ♘c4 16.0-0-0 ♖ac8 17.♖he1 a6 18.♗xc4 dxc4 19.♘a5 ♖xc5 20.♘xb7 ♖g5 21.g3 ♖b5 22.♘d6 ♖b6⩲ Kurnosov-Alexandrov, Rijeka 2010.

B2) It seems that Black should first take back the c5 pawn and only then continue his development: **10...♗e6 11.♗b5 ♗xc5 12.0-0** In the variation 12.♘xd5 ♗xd5 13.♕xd5 ♗b4+ 14.♔f1 0-0 15.♕b3 ♗a5 16.♖c1 ♘e5 17.♔e2 (Varga-Barkhagen, Budapest 1993) 17...a6 18.♘xe5 ♕xe5 Black has good compensation for the pawn, because the enemy king is clearly uncomfortable. **12...0-0 13.♖ac1** It is scarcely possible to take the pawn: 13.♘xd5?! ♕f5 14.♖ac1 ♗d6∓ – saving the pinned knight is going to be hard for White. **13...♘a5 14.♕d1 ♖ad8 15.♘e2 ♗b6 16.♘ed4 ♗g4⇄** Rizzo-Izsak, Porto San Giorgio 2009.

9.0-0-0



9...♕a5

The move **9...d4** is not yet a threat: 10.♕c2 ♗xc5 11.e3, and White wins a pawn. This variation can be continued a little: 11...♕a5 12.♗xf6 dxc3 13.♗xc3 ♘b4 14.a3!? ♘a2+ 15.♔d2 ♘xc3 16.♕xc3 ♖d8+ 17.♗d3 – White will gradually extinguish his opponent's initiative and remain with an extra pawn.

Maybe instead of the text move, **9...0-0!?** is stronger, e.g. **10.e4** 10.♗xf6 ♕xf6 11.♘xd5 ♕h6+ 12.e3 ♗xc5 13.♕b5 ♖ac8! (Shimanov-Vidit, Chennai 2011) 14.♕xc5 b6 15.♕a3 ♗xd5 looks very risky – Black's initiative more than compensates for the sacrificed pawn. **10...dxe4 11.♗c4** 11.♖xd8 ♗xb3 12.♖xa8 ♖xa8 13.♘d2 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♗xa2 15.♗xf6 e3 16.fxe3 gxf6⇄. **11...♕e7 12.♘d2 ♕xc5 13.♗xf6 ♘a5 14.♕c2** draw, Sulava-Palac, Marija Bistrica 2011, but Black is better after 14...♘xc4.

10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♘xd5 0-0-0?!

Maybe Black somewhat over-estimated his position. It was worth considering going into the opposite-coloured bishop ending: **11...♕xc5+ 12.♕c2 ♗xd5 13.♕xc5 ♗xc5 14.♖xd5 ♗xf2 15.e4** – White is slightly better, but a draw is the most likely outcome (Dronavalli-Arutinian, Dubai 2010).

12.e4 f5 13.♗c4 ♗xc5

In the variation **13...fxe4** 14.♘g5 ♗xc5 the reply 15.♘c3!± is unpleasant for Black.

14.♘g5

Here, too, and on the following move, the knight retreat to c3 looks very strong.

14...fxe4 15.♘xe4 ♗d4 16.♘dc3



16...♖he8

Thus, White has managed to stabilise his position, retaining his extra pawn, but thanks to his two active bishops (the unopposed dark-squared bishop is especially strong, commanding the central heights) Black has good counterplay. Instead of his last rather routine rook move, it was worth considering the transfer of the queen to the other flank, so as to create pressure in that area of the board: **16...♕f5!?** 17.♗xe6+ fxe6 18.f3 ♖hg8 19.♕c2 ♔b8 20.♔b1 h5. It is not so easy for White to strengthen his position, although of course his knight on e4 is excellently posted.

17.♗xe6+

White misses an excellent chance to drive his opponent's pieces from their strong central positions: **17.♘b5!** ♗e5 18.♗xe6+ ♖xe6 19.♘c5 ♖e7 20.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 21.♖d1±. The most stubborn defence now seems to be 21...♕g8, but in any case, the white position seems very threatening (22.♕h3+!? ♔b8 23.♘d7+, and at the least, White exchanges off the powerful bishop).

17...♖xe6 18.f3



18...♘e5?

Black dreams of breaking through to the b2-square (with a bishop on d4 this is logical), but should have paid attention to the opposite side of the board: **18...♖g6** 19.g4 (it turns out that White has no convenient way to defend the g2 pawn) 19...f5 20.gxf5 ♕xf5⇄. Black threatens to penetrate to the second rank, and the pawns on f3 and h2 are weak.

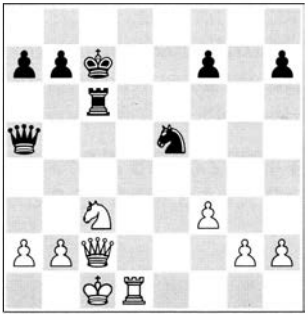
19.♘b5!

Now White eliminates the opponent's most powerful piece.

19...♖b6 20.♕c2+ ♖c6 21.♘ec3 ♗xc3

If Black tries to retain the bishop, then the white knights stays on b5, where it is very dangerous. Here is a sample variation: 21...♗e3+ 22.♔b1 a6? 23.♕f5+ ♖e6 24.♘d6+, and White wins.

22.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 23.♘xc3 ♔c7 24.♖d1



White has completed his development, stabilised his position and is ready to go over to the realisation of the extra pawn.

24...a6 25.♕xh7

Purely from a human point of view, White's desire to take another pawn is

perfectly understandable, but maybe it was stronger to play 25.♕f5, e.g.: 25...♔b8 (25...♖c5 26.♔b1 ♔b8 27.♕xh7?) 26.f4 ♘c4 27.♕xa5 ♘xa5 28.♖d8+ with a decisive advantage.

25...♔b8 26.♔b1 ♘c4 27.♕h8+ ♖c8 28.♕d4 ♕b4 29.b3 a5

Short has managed after all to create definite pressure on the queenside, but with a few accurate moves, Kramnik repulses all the threats.

30.♔a1 ♘a3 31.♕xb4 axb4 32.♘d5 ♖c2 33.♘xb4 ♖xg2 34.♖h1!

All in textbook fashion – the rook goes behind the passed pawn, which starts its victory march.

34...♔a7 35.h4 ♔b6 36.h5 ♔a5 37.h6 ♔xb4 38.h7 ♘c2+ 39.♔b1 ♘a3+ 40.♔c1

Black resigned.

Game 31
Akobian,Varuzhan
Krush,Irena
Gibraltar 2011

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕b3 c5 6.dxc5



6...♘c6

Black gets a somewhat inferior endgame after **6...♕a5** 7.♗d2 dxc4 8.♕xc4 ♕xc5 9.♕xc5 ♗xc5 10.♘e5 ♗d7 11.g3 ♘c6 12.♘xd7 ♘xd7 13.♗g2 ♖c8 14.♖c1± Nesterov-Masternak, Katowice 1993.

The recent idea **6...♘a6!?** is worth consideration, so as to transfer the queen's knight to e4: 7.e3 (7.a3 ♗xc3+ 8.♕xc3 ♘xc5 9.cxd5 ♘ce4 10.♕d4 exd5⇄) 7...♕a5 8.♗d2 ♘xc5 9.♕c2 ♘ce4 10.♖c1 ♘xd2 11.♘xd2 ♗d7 12.a3 ♗xc3 13.♕xc3 ♕xc3 14.♖xc3 ♔e7= Bartel-Gajewski, Warsaw 2011.

7.♗g5

In reply to **7.cxd5** it is possible to play not only 7...exd5, transposing into lines already seen, but also **7...♘xd5 8.♗d2 ♗xc5⇄**;

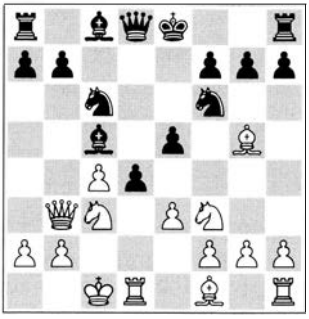
Quiet development by **7.e3 0-0 8.♗d2** (or 8.♗e2 dxc4 9.♕xc4 ♕e7 10.♘d4 ♘d5 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.e4 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♗xc5 14.0-0 e5⇄ Engqvist-Lalic, Isle of Man 1995) does not pose Black special problems, e.g.: **8...♗xc5**:

A) **9.0-0-0** ♕e7 10.♘a4?! ♘e4 11.♘xc5 ♘xf2 12.♘d3 dxc4 13.♕xc4 ♘xh1 14.♗e2 e5 15.e4 ♗e6 16.♕a4 (16.♕b5 f5∓) 16...♘f2!. The knight jumps out of the trap (17.♘xf2 ♕c5+), and White is an exchange and pawn down, so he resigned, Sliwa-Matulovic, Belgrade 1965;

B) **9.♖d1** ♕e7 10.♗e2 dxc4 11.♕xc4 a6 12.♖c1 ♖d8 13.0-0 ♗a7 14.♘e4 ♘d5 15.♖fd1 draw, Fridman-Ashley, Bermuda 1998.

7...h6

Not **7...d4?** on account of 8.0-0-0 ♗xc5 9.e3 e5 (Moracchini-Rainfray, France 1999)



Analysis diagram

10.♘xe5! ♘xe5 11.exd4 ♗xd4 12.♘b5 0-0 (12...♘c6 13.♘xd4 ♘xd4 14.♕e3+) 13.♖xd4 ♕e7 14.♕e3±.

8.♗xf6

Here too the bishop has to be exchanged, since after **8.♗h4?! g5 9.♗g3 ♘e4 10.e3 ♕a5** Black seizes the initiative.

8...♕xf6 9.e3

After **9.cxd5 exd5 10.e3** we reach a position seen in the notes to Black's 8th move in Kramnik-Short.

9...dxc4 10.♕xc4

After **10.♗xc4** the same answer 10...♕e7 would probably follow, and then Black will take on c5 with either the bishop or the queen, depending on circumstances.

10...♕e7 11.0-0-0 ♕xc5

After **11...♗xc5** there is the unpleasant 12.♘e4, and the white knight comes to d6, preventing Black castling.

12.♕xc5 ♗xc5 13.♗b5 ♗d7 14.♔b1 0-0-0



A roughly equal endgame has arisen, with a symmetrical pawn structure and no weaknesses on either side. Black has two bishops, but this can hardly be regarded as a serious plus, because the bishops are hard to manoeuvre here. White's pieces are quite active and he probably has a slight initiative in practice.

15.♘e4 ♗e7 16.♖c1

After 16.♘d6+?! ♗xd6 17.♖xd6 ♔c7 18.♖hd1 e5! (threatening 19...♗f5+) the advantage swings over to Black.

16...♔b8 17.♖hd1 f6

Tempting is 17...a6, but in this case, Black could have some problems after the exchange sacrifice 18.♖xd7!? ♖xd7 19.♗xc6 bxc6 20.♘e5. Perhaps for this reason, he decides to cover the e5-square.

18.♘h4!



This move demonstrates that the weakness of the light squares on the kingside causes Black some inconvenience. However, his position remains very solid.

18...♘e5 19.♗xd7 ♖xd7 20.f4

Worth consideration was 20.♖xd7 ♘xd7 21.♘g6 ♖e8 22.g4!, trying to fix the enemy pawns on the same colour squares as his bishop.

20...♖xd1

This is enough to maintain the balance, but at this moment, it seems to me that Black could have fought for the initiative: 20...♘d3!? 21.♘f2 (21.f5 exf5 22.♘xf5 ♖hd8) 21...♖hd8, and White needs to find a few accurate moves in order not to end up a little worse.

21.♖xd1 ♘c6 22.♘g6 ♖e8 23.♘g3 ♔c7

After 23...♗c5! 24.♘h5 ♖g8 25.e4 ♔c7 Black would have nothing to worry about.

24.♘h5

Stronger was 24.f5! e5 25.♘e4±.

24...♖g8 25.g4 ♗d6 26.h3 ♘e7

Black eliminates the opponent's active knight and thus maintains the status quo.

27.♘xe7 ♗xe7 28.f5 exf5 29.gxf5 g5

Not 29...g6? 30.♘f4. The text move, eliminating the backward pawn, is perfectly good.

30.♖d4



30...♖d8?!

Rybka suggested a subtle method of defence: 30...♖c8! 31.♔c2 (31.♖e4?! ♔d7, and the white king is cut off from the centre of the board) 31...♔c6 32.♖e4 (if the white king comes to the d-file, Black immediately exchanges rooks – 32.♔d3 ♖d8. After this, it is unrealistic to go after the f6 pawn, and Black has no other weaknesses) 32...♔d7+ 33.♔d3 ♖c5=. It turns out that the f5 pawn is also weak and here it is White who should seek the exchange of rooks.

31.♖e4 ♔d7 32.♖e6 ♖f8 33.e4 ♗d8 34.♔c2 ♖e8

This is probably already a necessary decision: Black gives up a pawn and counts on the drawish tendency of rook endings. Otherwise White will bring his king to d4, setting up a powerful central grouping, and play e4-e5, opening the path of his f6 pawn.

35.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 36.♖xf6 ♖xe4 37.♖xh6 ♖f4 38.f6 ♔e6 39.♖h7 ♖b4?!

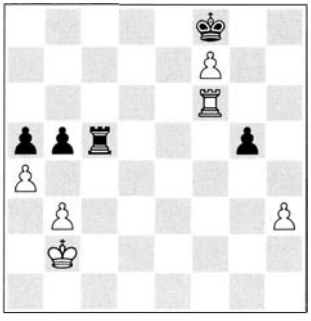
In my opinion, Black should have gone into the endgame with two passed pawns against one: 39...♔xf6!? 40.♖xb7 ♖f3 41.♖xa7 (41.♖b3 ♖xb3 42.♔xb3 ♔f5=; 41.♖h7 ♔g6 42.♖xa7

♖xh3) 41...♖xh3 42.b4 g4. The white king cannot get in the path of the enemy passed pawn, and Black should draw.

40.f7 ♔e7 41.♔c3 ♖b6 42.a4 a5 43.b3 ♖c6+ 44.♔b2 b6 45.♖g7 ♖c5

After 45...♖h6 46.♖xg5 ♔xf7 47.♖b5 ♔e7 48.h4 ♔d7 49.h5 Black also has a lost position.

46.♖g6 b5 47.♖f6 ♔f8



48.axb5?

White could have won with a beautiful combination, based on the theme of the breakthrough: 48.b4! ♖c4 (he also loses after 48...axb4 49.a5 ♖c3 50.♖f1 ♖a3 51.♖a1) 49.bxa5 ♖xa4 50.a6 ♖b4+ (50...g4 51.hxg4 ♖xg4 52.a7 ♖a4, and here White wins with the well-known 'skewer' trick: 53.♖h6! ♔xf7 54.♖h8!) 51.♔c3 ♖c4+ 52.♔d2 ♖a4 53.♔d3, and Black finds himself in zugzwang: he must either allow the pawn to a7 (when the skewer combination wins again), or let the white king into his position.

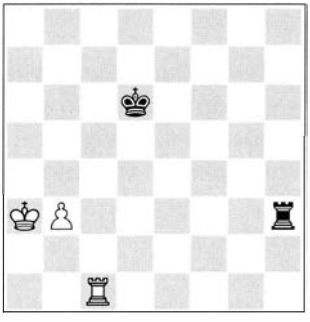
48...♖xb5 49.♔a3 ♖d5 50.♖f3 ♖b5 51.♖f2 ♖e5 52.♖f6 ♖e3

Black could just have shuffled the rook to and fro along the 5th rank, but instead he forces transition into a theoretically drawn ending with rook and pawn against rook. This is a responsible decision, but Krush was clearly confident in her assessment of the position.

53.♖f5 ♖xh3 54.♖xg5 ♔xf7 55.♖xa5 ♔e6 56.♖c5

White has managed to cut off the enemy king by only one file, and his pawn will only reach the fourth rank.

56...♔d6 57.♖c1



57...♖h8

The frontal attack is the standard method of defence against a pawn that has not advanced very far.

58.b4 ♖b8 59.♔a4 ♖a8+ 60.♔b3 ♖b8 61.♖c4 ♔d5 62.♖c5+ ♔d6 63.♔c4 ♖b7

So as to meet 64.b5 with 64...♖c7=.

64.♖c8 ♔d7 65.♖c5 ♔d6 66.♖h5 ♖b8 67.♖b5 ♖c8+ 68.♔b3 ♖c1 69.♔b2 ♔c6 70.♔xc1 ♔xb5 71.♔d2 ♔xb4

Draw.

Chapter Four

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.e3



The system with 5.e3 is rightly considered one of the most solid methods of fighting against the Ragozin Defence. White strengthens his centre and continues his development, making it clear to his opponent that he is not going to initiate any complications for the time being. First he wants to complete the development of his kingside and only then think about what is going on on the other wing.

As with a number of the lines we have already seen, this system appears under two names – the Ragozin and the Nimzo-Indian. The *Informant* opening classification gives all games in this line index E48 or E51, in other words, assigning them to the Nimzo-Indian. Ragozin objected to this approach in his day, demanding his 'copyright' on his favourite opening scheme, connected with the exchange on c4, the retreat of the bishop to d6 and the advance ...e6-e5.

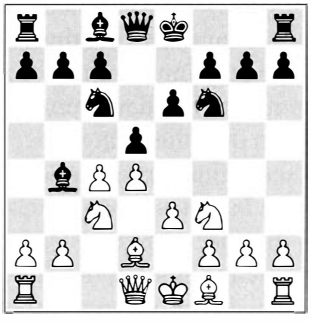
In this chapter, we will find a number of classic games, for example from the Botvinnik-Tal return match in 1961 and the legendary match Reshevsky-Fischer in 1960. Half a century ago, this system was tested thoroughly at the highest level, and the verdict was as follows: White retains a small initiative, but Black's position is playable. In later years, serious contributions were made to the development of the line by Genna Sosonko, Yury Razuvaev and especially Boris Gulko. It is interesting that Boris Frantsevich has played this line happily with both colours for more than 35 years, obtaining excellent practical results.

In my view, the most dangerous plan for White involves the advance e3-e4 and the closure of the centre with d4-d5. Admittedly, in this case, Black obtains the possibility of beginning an attack on the kingside, but White has sufficient resources to defend his king. It is more sensible for Black to combine a 'show of strength' on the kingside with the positionally healthy break ...c7-c6, which allows him gradually to neutralise White's threats on the queenside. This approach needs further practical tests.

Game 32
Pachman,Ludek
Fischer,Robert
Santiago 1959

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.d4 d5 4.e3 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♗b4 6.♗d2

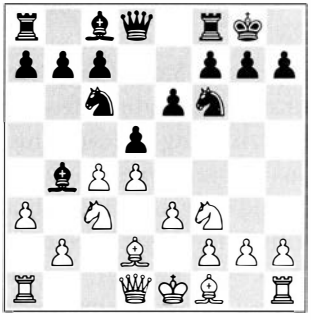
Lipnitsky criticises this move for its passivity, and claims that Black should now have no particular opening problems. However, in Megabase, this modest continuation is met more often than anything, significantly outstripping in popularity the main theoretical move 6.♗d3. For the sake of accuracy, one should say that it is mainly amateurs who play this way, whereas professionals prefer the more ambitious move.



6...0-0 7.a3

'Given that Black is ready to exchange the bishop for the knight on c3, there was no necessity for this move and it was more logical to play 7.♕c2. Pachman, however, is not seeking any real opening advantage and just strives for a safe, solid position' – Mednis.

In my opinion, this note is questionable. It is not a fact that after 6.♗d2 Black has to exchange on c3 and it does White no harm to clarify his opponent's intentions. But of course, it was possible simply to continue developing. In the following game, White did just that, and had no cause for complaint; his opponent's excessively sharp play allowed him quickly to obtain a large advantage: **7.♖c1 ♖e8 8.♗d3 e5?!** The basic plan was stronger – exchange on c4, possibly after a preliminary ...a7-a6, and then retreat the bishop to d6 and only then play ...e6-e5. **9.cxd5 ♘xd5 10.♘xd5 ♗xd2+ 11.♕xd2 ♕xd5 12.♗c4 ♕d8 13.d5 ♘e7?!** Black's position is not all that great, but now he just gives up a pawn for some reason. Like it or not, he had to retreat the knight to b8. **14.♘xe5 ♘f5 15.♘f3±** V.Filippov-Burtasov, Naberezhnie Chelny 2010.



7...♗xc3

There is some truth in the old joke that the worst bishop is always better than the best knight! The simple bishop retreat **7...♗e7** deserves more serious examination, e.g.: 8.♗d3 dxc4 9.♗xc4 a6 10.0-0 b5 11.♗a2 ♗b7⇄ Welling-Winants, Dieren 1987.

It was also possible to retreat to d6, **7...♗d6**, not fearing 8.c5 because of 8...♗e7 9.♗d3 e5!? 10.dxe5 ♘g4 11.♕c2 h6⇄.

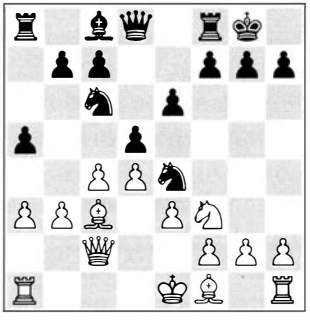
8.♗xc3 ♘e4 9.♕c2

There is also the following grandmaster game: **9.♖c1 ♕e7 10.♗d3 ♘xc3**

11.♖xc3 e5?! More cautious is 11...a5. **12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 dxc4 14.♖xc4 g6** Better is 14...♕xe5!? 15.♕c2 g6 16.♖xc7 ♗e6 17.0-0 ♖fc8 – having seized the c-file, Black has definite compensation for the pawn. **15.♕c2 c6 16.f4±** Zviagintsev-Blatny, New York 1997.

9...a5 10.b3

'With the dual purpose of preventing his queenside being fixed by 10...a4, and ensuring a spot for his queen's bishop on the long diagonal' – Mednis.
In the following game, White tried to attack on the kingside and left his king in the centre for the sake of doing so. Black responded with a central blow and obtained a satisfactory game: **10.♗d3** f5 11.h3 ♕e7 12.g4!? ♘xc3 13.bxc3 a4 14.gxf5 dxc4 (14...♔h8!?) 15.f6 ♕xf6 16.♗xh7+ ♔h8 17.♗e4 e5⇄ Krasenkow-Sosonko, Polanica Zdroj 1995.



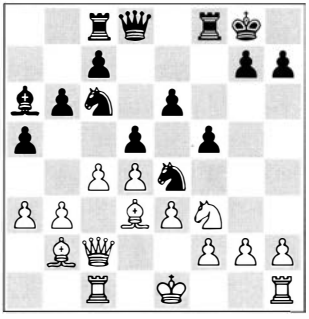
10...b6

Black wants to bring his bishop to a6 and await a suitable moment to exchange light-squared bishops. The only, but relatively unimportant drawback to this plan is the weakening of the c-file, on which the knight at c6 now starts to hang in the air.
It was worth considering the less ambitious, but more solid continuation **10...♘xc3 11.♕xc3 ♖e8** with the idea of advancing ...e6-e5 (possibly after a preliminary exchange on c4).

11.♗b2 ♗a6 12.♗d3 f5

Annotating his game with Kotov, (see No 26), Botvinnik wrote that such an outwardly aggressive set-up simply weakened the square e5, especially because Black lacks a dark-squared bishop. However it is not clear what else to suggest, since Black does at least get some practical chances on the kingside.

13.♖c1 ♖c8



14.0-0

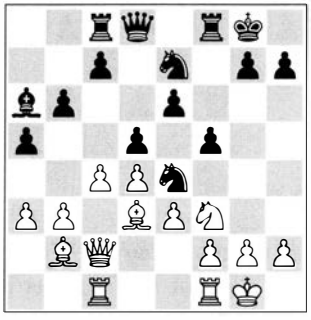
It appears unfavourable for White to exchange on d5, but is it? Let us look in more detail: **14.cxd5 ♗xd3 15.♕xd3** Black has good counterplay after 15.♕xc6?! exd5 16.♘e5 ♗a6 17.♕e6+ ♔h8 18.h4 with the unambiguous threat of h5 and ♘g6+: 18...♕f6 19.♕xd5 (19.♕xf6 gxf6 20.♘f3 f4±) 19...♖cd8 20.♕c6 ♖d6 21.♕c2 (21.♕xc7? f4∓) 21...c5⩲. **15...♕xd5 16.0-0 ♖fd8 17.♖fd1±** Black has achieved his main aim, establishing a blockade on the light squares, but it is not very solid, and the knight on c6 occupies an unstable position. However, if the knight moves, so as to prepare the break ...c7-c5, then White immediately

goes over to an assault in the centre: 17...♘e7?! 18.♘e5 c5 19.f3±.

14...♖f6

Mednis awards this move a question mark and writes: 'A completely wrong assessment of the position. Because the majority of the black pieces are located on the queenside, a direct attack on the kingside cannot succeed. Such attempts at so-called "playing for a win" usually end up being retrospectively renamed "playing for a loss". Correct is 14...♘e7 with the intention of playing ...c7-c5, and if White retains any advantage at all, it is minimal.'

But is Mednis' judgement correct? Let us study his suggested plan in more detail: **14...♘e7**



Analysis diagram

15.♘e5 ♘g6 The hasty 15...c5 fails to 16.f3 ♘f6 17.dxc5 ♖xc5 18.♗d4±. **16.♘c6 ♕d6 17.cxd5 ♗xd3 18.♕xd3 ♕xd5** After 18...exd5 19.♘a7 ♖ce8 20.♘b5± Black loses a pawn. **19.♕c2±** White has established unpleasant pressure on the c-file, whilst Black's chances of a kingside attack are not very great. Therefore I would not criticise the aggressive text move – Fischer is after counterchances. Those who do not mind passive defence could choose **14...♗b7!? 15.♕e2 ♕e7** with quite a solid position.

15.♖fd1 ♖h6 16.♗f1

It is well-known that a flank attack should be met by counterplay in the centre. In my opinion, stronger was **16.cxd5 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3** (17.♕xc6? ♗e2∓) **17...exd5 18.♖c2±**.

16...g5



Mednis calls this move the decisive mistake, but the computer approves of it. Even so, one gets the impression that the reply may have come as a surprise to Fischer, after which he lost the thread of the game. How could this have happened? I think that he did not take seriously the exchange on d5, thinking that from a positional point of view, this operation was highly unfavourable to White, since it leads to the exchange of light-squared bishops and White is left with a 'bad' bishop against a 'good' knight. But this is only one side of the coin, or, perhaps a better analogy, only the tip of the iceberg.

17.cxd5

Also worthy of attention is **17.♘d2**, in order to exchange Black's most active piece. This is how events may develop after that: **17...g4 18.♘xe4 fxe4** Black cannot allow his opponent to activate the bishop on b2: 18...dxe4 19.d5 ♕h4 20.h3 gxh3 21.g3 h2+ 22.♔h1+–.

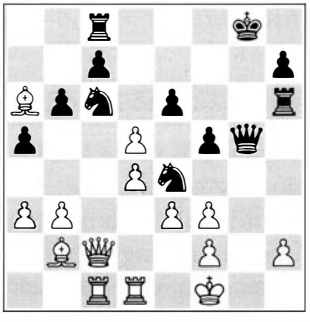
19.cxd5 ♗xf1 20.♕xe4 ♗xg2! 21.♕xg2 exd5 22.f3 The pawn on g4 must be removed, else White can be worse: 22.e4 ♕d7 23.exd5 ♘e7 24.d6 ♖xd6 25.d5 ♘g6! 26.♖c4 h5±. **22...♖g6 23.fxg4 ♕g5 24.♔h1 ♖e8**⩲.

17...g4?

It is only after this that Black falls into a difficult position. One has to agree with Mednis: 'Attack at all costs! But the cost is too great and the attack too lacking in solidity, to bring success.'

Meanwhile, Fischer could perfectly well have emerged unscathed: **17...♗xf1 18.♔xf1** 18.dxc6 ♗xg2! – maybe this is the move Black missed? 19.♔xg2 g4 20.♘e5 ♕h4 21.♔f1 (21.♖h1 ♕h3+ 22.♔g1 ♘g5−+) 21...♕xh2∓; 18.♕xc6 ♗xg2 19.♔xg2 g4 20.♘d2 ♕h4! with a strong attack (and 20...♖xh2+ is also sufficient for a draw). **18...exd5 19.♘e5 ♘xe5 20.dxe5 g4!** 20...♖xh2? 21.♕c6! ♖h1+ 22.♔e2 ♖xd1 23.♕e6+ ♔f8 24.♖xd1 c6 25.♕xf5+ ♔g8 26.♖h1 ♖c7 27.e6+−. **21.f3 gxf3 22.gxf3 ♖g6! 23.fxe4 ♕g5 24.exd5 ♕g1+ 25.♔e2 ♕g2+ 26.♔e1 ♕h1+**, and the game ends in perpetual check.

18.♗xa6 gxf3 19.gxf3 ♕g5+ 20.♔f1



20...♖xh2

'An interesting moment from the psychological point of view: could such a brilliant attacking player as Fischer sacrifice a whole rook for nothing?' – Mednis.

21.fxe4

'The bluff succeeds. Objectively speaking, one can always point out that it is better to take a rook than a knight, but during the game, fear affects one. Of course, 21.♗xc8! won easily. Both black knights are attacked and even the possible win of the white queen comes at too great a cost' – Mednis.

Editors'Note: In his book Bobby Fischer, Karsten Müller writes that after **21.♗xc8 ♕h5 22.♗xe6+ ♔f8 23.♔e2 ♖xf2+ 24.♔d3 ♕xf3** Black would get 'more counterchances'.

However this may be, after the careful move in the game, White's position remains winning, but on his next move, he needed to find a precise retort.

21...♖f8 22.e5?

Losing all his advantage. He wins after **22.♖d2** (defending the f2-square) 22...fxe4 23.♕xe4 exd5 24.♕xd5+! ♕xd5 25.♗c4 ♘e7 26.e4 ♕xc4+ 27.♖xc4 – White has not only an extra pawn, but also an overwhelming positional advantage.

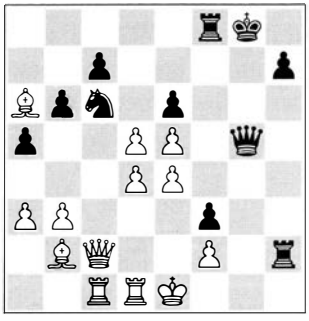
22...f4



23.e4?

White persists in keeping the f-file closed, but this move could have cost him the game. It was essential to run the king out of the danger zone: 23.♔e2! ♖xf2+ 24.♔xf2 fxe3+ 25.♔e2 ♖f2+ 26.♔d3 ♘b4+! 27.axb4 ♕f5+ 28.♔c3 ♖xc2+ 29.♖xc2 axb4+ 30.♔xb4 ♕xc2 31.♖g1+ ♔h8 32.dxe6 ♕xb2 33.♗c4 ♕a2 34.♔b5 ♕a8! 35.e7 ♕e8+ 36.♔a6 ♕a8+ 37.♔b5 ♕e8+. A lively struggle, during which both sides have operated under the watchful eye of Rybka, shows the wonders of inventiveness, and ends in perpetual check.

23...f3 24.♔e1



24...♕g1+?

Clearly, this was not Fischer's day. After the cold-blooded 24...exd5! White would have to solve a difficult problem. The knight cannot be taken because of mate on g1 and nor does 25.♗f1 ♕g1 threatening 26...♕xf1! and 27...♖h1# help. I have not been able to find a satisfactory defence for White.

25.♔d2

'Not 25.♗f1? ♕xf1+! 26.♔xf1 ♖h1#. This was Bobby's idea, but plans based on primitive traps do not work against serious opponents in tournament games. Maybe in five-minute games, but not in tournaments, where masters have not just seconds, but minutes for each move' – Mednis.

25...♕xf2+

After 25...♖xf2+ 26.♔d3 ♕g3 27.♕xc6 ♖xb2 28.♕xe6+ ♔h8 29.♔c3 White repulses all the threats.

26.♔c3 ♕g3 27.♕d3 exd5 28.♖g1 ♖g2 29.♖xg2 ♕xg2 30.♕f1

'From a practical point of view, the correct way to play when one has a material advantage – exchange pieces, especially the queens. This reduces the danger of an immediate catastrophe' – Mednis.

30...dxe4 31.♕xg2+ fxg2 32.♖g1 ♖f2 33.♗c4+ ♔f8 34.♗d5 ♖f3+ 35.♔c4 b5+ 36.♔c5 ♘e7 37.♖xg2 ♘xd5 38.♔xd5 ♖xb3 39.♔xe4 b4 40.axb4

Seeing that his opponent had made the time-control and with adjournment beckoning, Fischer resigned.

Game 33
Furman,Semen
Lipnitsky,Isaak
Baku 1951

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4

'Preparing for this game (which was of great sporting significance – VB) was extremely difficult. Both opponents had spent a month sharing a room together and preparing together for each round, and had discussed many different opening variations. Each knew the other's

openings like the back of his hand. I knew that Furman in most cases played 1.d4 and happily allowed the Nimzo-Indian Defence, since he was one of the leading experts on the opening. I decided to choose the Nimzo-Indian, but then to go into the Ragozin, which it seemed to me would be less pleasant for Furman to meet. This explains the move-order of the first six moves' – Lipnitsky.

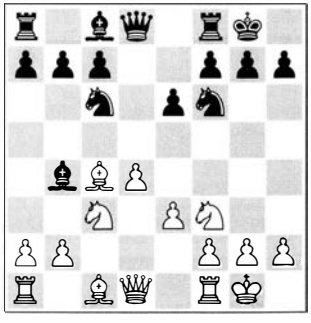
4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.♘f3 ♘c6

'It is clear that this move is in no way weaker than 6...c5, 6...b6 or 6...♘bd7, after which the game remains within the confines of the Nimzo-Indian Defence. But we already know that the choice of one variation or another can have significant psychological motivation' – Lipnitsky.

7.0-0 dxc4

'Black reveals his intention of sacrificing a pawn. Otherwise, he could have played 7...a6, so as first to defend the square b5' – Lipnitsky.

8.♗xc4



8...♗d6

The most direct method of play, which nonetheless enjoys the greatest popularity. Black wants to carry out the advance ...e6-e5 as quickly as possible, without wasting time on preparation, and thereby create tension in the centre and free the bishop at c8.

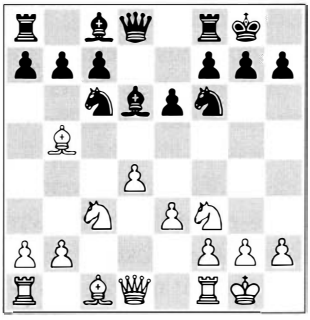
Of course, it is possible to try to carry out this plan in a more favourable form, but White also has a number of useful moves.

The move **8...♕e7** is not very good, as the queen is not well-placed here. There could follow **9.a3 ♗xc3** After 9...♗d6 10.e4 e5 11.♗g5! the pin of the knight at f6 is very unpleasant, e.g. 11...♗g4 12.♘d5 ♕d8 (Taimanov-Lisitsyn, Leningrad 1947) 13.h3 ♗xf3 14.♕xf3 ♗e7 15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 16.d5 ♘d4 17.♕d3±. **10.bxc3 e5 11.a4 ♘e4 12.♗a3 ♘d6 13.♗d5 e4 14.♘d2 ♗f5 15.♕b1**± V.Karpov-Provotorov, Sochi 2006.

Slightly better is the same idea with the queen going to e8, but here too, White can take the initiative: **8...♕e8 9.e4!** Insufficiently energetic is 9.♗d2 a6 10.♕c2 ♗d7 11.♘e5 ♗d6 12.f4 ♘b4 13.♕b3 c5 14.♗e2 cxd4 15.exd4 ♗c6 16.♖ac1 ♕e7⇄ Cherepkov-Kortchnoi, Leningrad 1951. **9...e5 10.d5 ♘d4 11.♘xd4 exd4 12.♕xd4 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♕xe4 14.♕xe4 ♘xe4 15.♖e1 ♘d6 16.♗f1 ♗d7 17.♗f4 ♖fe8 18.c4**± Boleslavsky-Taimanov, Moscow 1952.

The main alternative to the game continuation is **8...a6**, the idea of which is not hard to understand: Black defends the b5-square against the white knight or bishop, and obtains the possibility in the right circumstances to play ...b7-b5, creating counterplay on the queenside. Then there could follow: 9.♕c2 ♗d6 10.♖d1 ♕e7 11.a3 h6 12.h3 e5 13.b4 ♗d7 14.♗b2 ♖ae8 15.b5 axb5 16.♘xb5 e4 17.♘d2 ♘a5⇄ Sakaev-Miladinovic, Moscow 1994.

9.♗b5



9...e5

'This pawn sacrifice outwardly reminds one of the similar sacrifice in the game Capablanca-Ragozin, Moscow 1936. But in reality, it is different in that this version is based on another idea. In this case, with a more favourable disposition of the white pieces (in particular, the queen being on d1), Black does not have a forcing attack on the white king, and the positional pawn sacrifice is based on a lasting initiative in the centre, especially the weakened light squares in the opponent's camp.

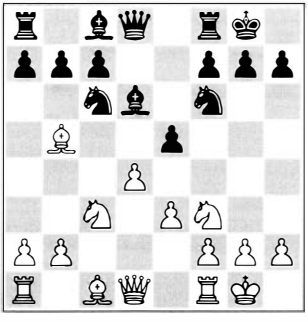
Therefore, in sacrificing the pawn in this position, I hoped that the 'novelty' would catch my opponent unawares, but it turned out that I was completely wrong. Shortly before the tournament, Furman had analysed this position and, after becoming familiar with this pawn sacrifice, had been convinced that the whole variation was favourable for White. As a result, the psychological effect of my novelty was close to zero. But since, during the game, I did not know this, I was very satisfied when I played the move 9...e5' – Lipnitsky.

White is threatening to play e3-e4, so Black has no time to prepare ...e6-e5. Thus, after **9...♕e7** the reply **10.e4!** is very unpleasant. This is stronger than 10.♗xc6, because after 10...bxc6 11.e4, as well as 11...e5 there is the additional possibility 11...♗b4!?. However, here too he has a dubious position.



Analysis diagram

10...e5 Also better for White is 10...♗b4 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♘xd5 exd5 13.♕a4. **11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.dxe5 ♗xe5 13.♘xe5 ♕xe5** Black has no compensation for the broken queenside. There could follow: 14.♕f3! ♖e8 15.♗f4 ♕e6 16.♖fe1 ♖b8 17.♕e2 ♖b4 18.f3 c5 19.♗xc7 ♗a6 20.♕f2± Petrosian-Nei, Tallinn 1983.

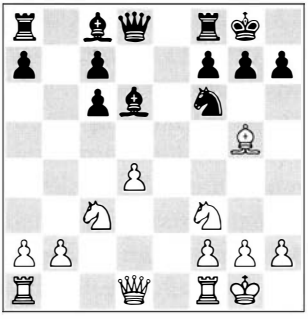


10.♗xc6 exd4 11.♗xb7

Of course, White is not obliged to take the bait. Let us look at a few alternatives:

Black does not have any real problems after **11.♕xd4** bxc6 12.e4 ♘g4 13.♕a4 ♕f6 14.♕a5 c5 (14...♖e8!?) 15.♘d5 ♕g6⇄ Kuzubov-A. Mastrovasilis, Plovdiv 2008. Two other tries are rather more serious.

A) **11.exd4** 'White declines the win of a pawn and prefers to deprive his opponent of the initiative, pin the knight on f6 and hopes later to be able to exploit the doubled c-pawns' – Lipnitsky. **11...bxc6 12.♗g5**:



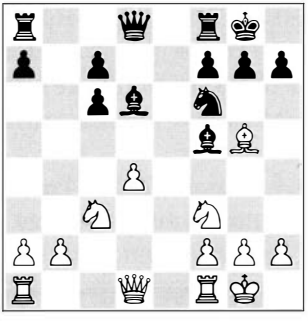
Analysis diagram

A1) Bad is **12...♖b8** on account of **13.♕c2!**. The queen not only defends b2, but also ties the bishop on c8 to the important square f5. Now the entry of the knight into e5 becomes an unpleasant positional threat: **13...h6 14.♗h4 ♖b6** (S.Furman-Kopylov, Leningrad 1954) **15.♘e5!**±;

A2) **12...h6 13.♗h4 ♖e8** 13...♖b8 14.♕c2 ♖b6 15.♘e5! – see 12...♖b8 above; 13...♗g4 14.h3 ♗h5 15.g4 ♗g6 16.♘e5 ♗xe5 17.dxe5 ♕xd1 18.♖axd1 ♘d5 19.♘xd5 cxd5 20.♖xd5± Portisch-Andersson, Prague 1970. **14.♕d3 g5** 14...♗e6 15.♖ad1 ♖b8 16.b3 ♗g4 17.♖de1 ♖xe1 18.♖xe1 c5 19.♘d5 g5 20.♘xg5 ♗xh2+ 21.♔xh2 ♕xd5 22.♘e4 ♘xe4 23.♖xe4 ♗f5 24.♕g3+ ♗g6 25.♖e5 ♕xd4 26.f4± Lilienthal-Estrin, Moscow 1953. **15.♗g3 ♘h5 16.♖fe1 ♘xg3 17.hxg3**± Aronin-Chistiakov, Sochi 1952;

A3) **12...♗f5** Lipnitsky awards this move an exclamation mark and writes: 'This move holds the balance and has the following motivation. Because the retreats of the bishop to d6 and e7 look passive, Black needs to play his queen to d7, although this means that after ♗g5xf6 he will accept a significant weakening of his kingside. Therefore Black takes advance measures to defend his king. From f5, the bishop acts in the centre and prevents the white queen occupying the favourable squares c2 and d3.'

These general considerations are quite correct, of course, but White has at his disposal a very interesting tactical possibility:



Analysis diagram

13.♘e5! Black's idea was completely justified in the following game: 13.♖e1 ♖e8 14.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 15.♗xf6 gxf6. Black has two pairs of doubled pawns, but these are not easy to attack. This pawns protect the light squares and the bishops control the whole centre. I believe Black has satisfactory play: 16.♘h4 ♗g6 17.♕d2 ♕e6 18.♖e1 ♕g4 19.♘xg6 hxg6 20.♘e4 ♔g7 21.♘xd6 draw, Estremera Panos-A.

Mastrovasilis, Leros 2009. **13...c5 14.♘d5 ♗xe5** 14...cxd4? 15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.♘c6, and the black queen does not have a single retreat square. **15.dxe5 ♕xd5 16.exf6 ♕xd1** Black should exchange queens; after 16...♗d3 17.fxg7 he has a very bad king, and the opposite-coloured bishops enhance White's chances of a successful attack. **17.♖fxd1 ♖fb8 18.♖d5** 18.b3!?. **18...♗e6 19.♖xc5 ♖xb2 20.a3** – the endgame is not of the pleasantest for Black, but perhaps he can hold;

A4) **12...♖e8!? 13.♕d3** 13.♖e1 ♖xe1+ 14.♕xe1 h6 15.♗h4 g5 16.♗g3 ♖b8⇄. **13...c5** 13...h6!? 14.♗h4 c5 15.♗xf6 ♕xf6 16.♘e4 ♕f4 17.dxc5 ♗f8 18.♘g3 ♗g4 19.♖ac1 ♖ad8 20.♕c4 ♕xc4 21.♖xc4 (Michenka-Gipslis, Ostrava 1993) 21...♗xf3 22.gxf3 ♖d2±. **14.d5** 14.dxc5?? ♗xh2+, and White resigned, Ghitescu-Fischer, Leipzig 1960. **14...♖b8 15.b3 h6 16.♗h4 ♗g4 17.♖fe1 ♗xf3 18.♕xf3 ♗e5 19.♖ad1 ♕d7⇄** Moiseev-Ghitescu, Amsterdam 1967;

B) **11.♘xd4 bxc6 12.♘xc6** Keres drew attention to this possibility.



Analysis diagram

B1) After **12...♕e8 13.♘d4 ♗b7** Black, in my opinion, does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn:

B11) Firstly, White can afford to 'fall into the trap' set by his opponent: **14.♕a4 ♗xh2+ 15.♔xh2 ♕e5+ 16.♔g1 ♘g4 17.♘f3!** This move forces transition into a favourable endgame, whereas 17.f4? loses because of 17...♕h5. **17...♗xf3 18.♕f4 ♕xf4 19.exf4 ♗b7 20.♗e3** 20.f3!? ♘h6 21.♗e3 ♘f5 22.♗c5±. **20...♘xe3 21.fxe3 ♖fe8 22.♔f2±** Muratov-Vesselovsky, Moscow 1973;

B12) Even stronger is **14.♘f5!?**, e.g.: 14...♗e5 15.f3 g6 16.♘g3 h5 17.♕c2 ♖d8 18.e4 ♗d4+ 19.♔h1 ♔g7 20.♘ge2 c5 21.♗g5± Norwood-Blatny, Groningen 1984.

B2) **12...♕d7!** It is important to take the f5-square under control and not interfere with the rooks on the 8th rank. Keres' idea consists in the fact that after **13.♕a4** (13.♘d4 ♗a6 14.♖e1 ♖fd8⇄) **13...♗b7 14.♘a5** the exchange of queens is forced. However, if we continue the variation: **14...♕xa4 15.♘xa4 ♗a6 16.♖d1 ♘g4!? 17.g3** 17.h3? ♗h2+ 18.♔h1 ♘xf2+. **17...♘e5** or **17...♖fd8**, and Black has good compensation for the pawn – it is hard for White to complete his development, and his knights are rather comically placed on the edge of the board.

Back to the game.



11...♗xb7 12.♘xd4

'In this position, both sides were satisfied: White because he had won a pawn and Black because he had sacrificed it' – Lipnitsky.

12...♕d7

'Black brings his queen into play and prevents the threats 13.♘db5 or 13.♘f5. Either move would allow White either to eliminate the bishop on d6 or force the exchange of queens... Now Black has compensation for the pawn in the shape of greater freedom of action and two bishops, with White's queenside insufficiently developed.

Playing similar positions involves well-known difficulties. Black's compensation is of a temporary character and could evaporate quite quickly. White only needs to liquidate his development lag and he can go over to a policy of exchanges or utilise his extra e-pawn in the centre. However one should not draw any hasty conclusions from this and start attacking the enemy king with all of one's pieces, trying to mate him or else regain the pawn before he can develop. Such an approach can easily turn out to be a false trail. On the other hand, of course, if there is a chance of a successful attack on the king, one should exploit it.

But often such attacks can be easily repulsed, and in the process of defence, the undeveloped pieces gradually come into play. The attacking side, having placed his pieces on the kingside, often lacks sufficient effectiveness in the centre and this can enhance the defensive possibilities in several ways: 1. by the exchange of the attacking pieces; 2. by driving them away; 3. by returning the extra material at the right moment, and taking key squares.

Thus, in this position, with the initiative for a pawn, to throw all one's forces into an unclear attack on the king would be to burn one's boats and play *va-banque*. A different method of play is correct – exploit the greater freedom of movement for further annexation of key points on the board, and the quickest possible mobilisation of the remaining forces. In doing this, it is important to prevent successful development by White' – Lipnitsky.



13.♘db5

A) After **13.♕a4** Lipnitsky recommends **13...♕g4**, and Black creates unpleasant threats on the kingside. On the other hand, it is wrong to force things: 13...♗xh2+ 14.♔xh2 ♘g4+ 15.♔g1 ♕d6 16.♘f3 ♗xf3 17.♕f4 ♕xf4 18.exf4 ♗c6 19.f3 – White still retains definite pressure in the endgame;

B) **13.f3** 'This move was recommended by Euwe. Its point is to strengthen the kingside and, by keeping the knight in the centre, set up three threats: e3-e4, ♘d4-b5 and ♕d1-a4. Certainly, with the knight on d4, the black queen on d7 is limited in its range' – Lipnitsky. But here too, Black can obtain adequate counterplay, in

more than one way: 13...♗e5 14.♕a4 ♕d6 15.h3 ♖fd8⩲ or 13...♗a6!? 14.♖e1 c5 15.♘f5 ♗xh2+ 16.♔xh2 ♕xf5 17.♕d6 ♗d3!? 18.e4 ♕h5+ 19.♔g1 c4⇄.

13...♕c6 14.f3



'This is the position, on the basis of which White considered the variation good for him. Let us familiarise ourselves more fully with the ideas of the position. The direct consequences of playing to win the pawn are that in White's position: 1. the light squares are very weak; 2. his queenside is insufficiently developed.

The move 14.f3 is of great significance. It not only reduces to nothing the action of the black battery along the long diagonal, but, what is especially important, it prepares the move e3-e4, so as to complete the mobilisation of the queenside, whilst placing the pawns on light squares somewhat makes up for the absence of White's light-squared bishop.

Black, who has finished his development, has the initiative. But he will not have sufficient compensation for the pawn, if White is able to implement his plan. So how can Black develop his initiative, especially considering that, unlike in the game Capablanca-Ragozin, here he does not have an attack on the king? The answer is that he must find a way to continue the initiative, that makes it as difficult as possible for White to carry out his plan. This is the aim of the next few moves' – Lipnitsky.

14...♗e5!

'Analysing the diagram position, Furman looked at 14...♗c5. This natural move is certainly tempting, but is refuted by means of 15.♘d4!, and the black queen lacks a convenient retreat square' – Lipnitsky.

Possible then is: 15...♕d7 (15...♕d6 16.♘b3!±) 16.♘a4 ♗b6 17.♕c2 ♗xd4 18.♖d1 ♗xe3+ 19.♗xe3±.

15.♕c2

Without waiting to be invited, White moves the queen off the open file and defends the square g2, anticipating the possible jump ...♘g4!?. After **15.♘d4** ♕d6 16.f4 ♗xd4 17.♕xd4 (or 17.exd4 ♖fe8!±) 17...♕c6 Black seizes the initiative.

15...♖fd8 16.a4

In reply to 16.♘d4, Black can regain the pawn, obtaining a position with equal material, or play 16...♕d6!?, trying to weaken the opponent's kingside defences.



16...♕c4!

'A very unpleasant move for White, since Black develops his initiative, whilst preventing White from carrying out his plan. The threats of 17...♗xh2+! and 17...♕h4 prevent White continuing with the mobilisation of his forces' – Lipnitsky.

17.♕f2

It was worth considering 17.♕e2, continuing to keep an eye on the square d3.

17...♖d3 18.♔h1 ♖ad8

'Black's initiative continues to grow inexorably. The absence of a quick attack on the king should in no way discourage Black, since sufficient compensation can be obtained from the strong pressure on the white position overall' – Lipnitsky.

19.e4



'Finally White has managed to play this move, but his opponent's forces have already managed to seize the greater part of the board' – Lipnitsky.

19...a6 20.♘a3 ♕b3 21.♘ab1

'The knight from g1, having traced the route f3-d4-b5-a3, now occupies his colleague's initial position, so as to reinforce it on c3. Instead of the move 21.♘ab1 it was possible to move the bishop. But after 21.♗g5 there could follow 21...h6 22.♗xf6 (or 22.♗h4 ♖d2; even stronger is 22...♕b4!, to prevent the enemy queen jumping into c5, and keeping the entry into d2 as a threat – V.B.) 22...♗xf6, and White is no better off than in the game.

After 21.♗e3 it currently makes no sense to regain the pawn by means of 21...♗xc3, since this eases the pressure. Bad is 21...♗xe4 22.♘xe4 ♘xe4 (or 22...♖xe3 23.♘c5!) 23.fxe4 ♖xe3 24.♘c4!. But Black can strengthen his position further by 21...a5 and then ...♗a6. The white knight cannot come back to b5 because of the possible reply ...c7-c6. Probably, it is already hard to defend the white position' – Lipnitsky.

One can agree with all of Lipnitsky's considerations, except the last. The assessment of the position as difficult for White appears somewhat exaggerated. I have already stated before that, in my opinion, Lipnitsky sometimes overrated the initiative.

21...♗d4

'The e5-square has been a superb outpost for the black bishop, where he has been undisturbed for six moves, a rare thing in the middlegame. But now the bishop's role there has been fulfilled, and it is needed more on c5, to where Black now transfers it' – Lipnitsky.

In principle, the threat of ♖a3 is not so terrible. Instead of the text move, 21...h6 deserved attention, not allowing the enemy bishop into g5. After 22.♖a3 ♕e6 23.♘e2 ♖3d7 the position remains double-edged.

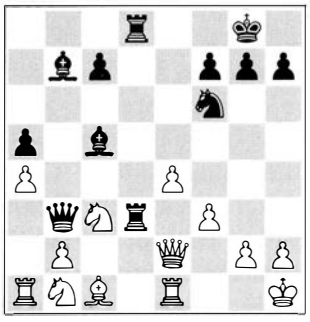
22.♕e2 ♗c5 23.♖e1?!

In hanging on to his extra pawn, White goes into deep defence, whereas now was the very time to throw some ballast

overboard, but finally complete his development and activate his pieces. After 23.♗g5!? h6 24.♗xf6 gxf6 25.♘a3 with the idea of ♕c2, White has a fully defensible position.

23...a5

After 23...h6!? 24.♘a3 ♘h5 it is not so easy for White to find a move, although Rybka insists that the position is close to equality.



24.♘d2?

Furman probably overlooked his opponent's reply. After 24.♘a3! with the idea of ♕c2, White holds his lines.

24...♕c2!

An unexpected and extremely unpleasant pin! In addition, there is a threat of 25...♗a6.

25.♘f1?

Much more tenacious was **25.♕d1! ♕xd1 26.♖xd1 ♗e3 27.♖a3!**. This move involves a tactical idea which is not easy to see (after 27.♘cb1 ♘d7 28.♖e1 ♗a6∓ it is practically impossible to untangle the white pieces): **27...♗c6!** After 27...♗xd2 there follows the point – 28.♘b1! ♖xa3 29.♘xa3, and now the black bishop is pinned; in order to save it, he has to give back the extra piece: 29...♘xe4 30.fxe4 ♗g5 31.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 32.♗d2=. Bad too is 27...♖xd2? 28.♗xd2 ♖xd2 29.♖xd2 ♗xd2 30.♖b3 ♗c6 31.♘d5!, and it is already White who is playing for a win. **28.♘cb1** 28.♘b5 ♖xa3 29.bxa3 ♘e8. **28...♖xa3 29.bxa3 ♗xa4 30.♖e1 ♗d4 31.♘c4** Of course, Black's advantage is not in doubt, but the white position seems defensible.

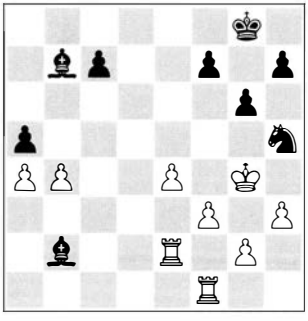
25...♕xe2 26.♖xe2

26.♘xe2 ♗f2 is little better.

26...♖d1!

'The decisive penetration into the white camp occurs via the weakened light squares (♕d7-c6-c4-b3-c2, ♖d8-d3-d1). Black wins two pieces for a rook' – Lipnitsky.

27.♘xd1 ♖xd1 28.h3 ♖xf1+ 29.♔h2 ♗g1+ 30.♔g3 ♘h5+ 31.♔g4 g6 32.b4 ♗d4 33.♗b2 ♗xb2 34.♖xf1



Black announced mate in five.

34...♗c8+ 35.♔g5 ♗f6+ 36.♔h6 ♗g7+ 37.♔g5 h6+ 38.♔h4 ♗f6#

'This game gave me great satisfaction, because by means of a planned development of the strategic initiative, I succeeded in demonstrating the possibility of a pawn sacrifice in this variation, even without the presence of an attack on the king' – Lipnitsky.

Game 34

Taimanov,Mark
Fischer,Robert

Buenos Aires 1960

Mark Taimanov recalled the background to this game in his book *Mark Taimanov's Chess School* (Moscow 2008):

'... The Buenos Aires tournament brought together a very strong field, but young Bobby had come there to win. "I am the youngest one here (he was barely 17) but the strongest", he announced, without false modesty, at the opening of the tournament. Alas, his illusions were shattered very quickly – the tournament was destined to become the worst of his career, and indeed, his only real disaster...

Our game took place somewhere in the middle of the tournament. Bobby had just lost, and was very upset. It was even claimed that he had cried, although nobody had actually seen this. At a party at the embassy, in company, he suddenly "came to", and announced: "That's enough – the defeats are forgotten. Tomorrow I start winning! Who am I playing? Taimanov? Oh well, that settles it!".

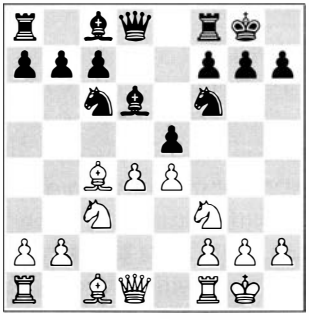
Given that I was standing nearby, his self-confidence was somewhat indelicate. I have to admit that I do not know any more effective way of getting me "up" for the game. "OK, Bobby, I'm ready!"

I played this game with special motivation and desire, but as often happens in such cases, when one wants not only to win, but also to punish the opponent, one's nerves can give way. I fell into time-trouble and missed a certain win on the last move of the time-control. But even in the adjourned position, I retained winning chances – Fischer faced a difficult defence. My colleagues were betting against him: "Fischer will not hold this, it requires such subtlety!".

And indeed, when after tactical complications, the game came into an endgame where he was a pawn down, one sensed that Fischer was struggling and balancing on the edge of a precipice. But then we reached the critical, most important position of all, and... Fischer suddenly started playing quickly and flawlessly, like a machine. He bashed out 10-12 only moves inside a minute and the draw became inevitable. Astounded by the finish of the game, I asked him, "Bobby, how did you manage to find this narrow drawing path, and so quickly?". "But there was nothing to find", replied a satisfied Bobby, with a smile. "A few years ago I saw in your magazine *Shakhmaty v SSSR* a detailed analysis of this endgame, by Averbakh, and I remembered all the variations very well."'

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.d4 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0 dxc4 8.♗xc4 ♗d6 9.♘b5

A) The most popular alternative these days is **9.e4**, immediately provoking a crisis in the centre. After the necessary reply **9...e5** White again has quite a wide choice:



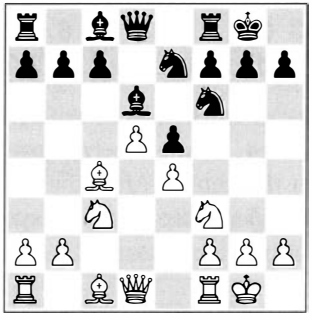
Analysis diagram

A1) **10.♗e3?!** is bad because of 10...exd4! 11.♗xd4 (11.♘xd4 ♘g4!∓)

11...♗g4 12.♗e3 ♗xf3 13.gxf3 ♘h5∓. As you can see, White's problems in this line stem from the fact that he has not managed to take under control the square g4;

A2) The exchanging operation brings White little: **10.dxe5** ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.f3 ♕e7 13.♔h1 c6 14.♕e1 b5 15.♗d3 ♖d8 16.♗c2 b4 17.♘e2 ♕c5± Vokac-Blatny, Lazne Bohdanec 1995;

A3) **10.d5** Black must always be prepared for White's closing the centre and transferring the weight of the struggle to the flanks. **10...♘e7** Positions of this type remind one of the classical system of the King's Indian. White has a space advantage and good prospects on the queenside, whilst Black will attack the kingside, which always causes additional nervousness to the white player:



Analysis diagram

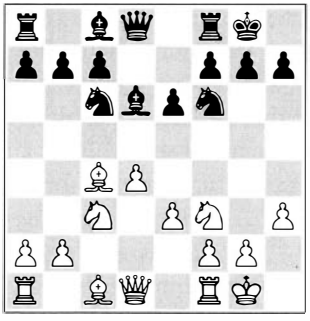
A31) **11.♖e1 ♘g6** 11...a6 12.h3 ♘g6 13.♗f1 ♗d7 14.a4 h6 15.♗e3 – by transposition we have reached the game Reshevsky-Rubinetti, Palma de Mallorca 1970; see the note to White's 13th move. **12.♘d2 a6 13.♗f1** White has retreated the bishop to defend the kingside, whilst his knight wants to come to c4 and later, as appropriate, to e3 and f5. **13...b5⇄**;

A32) **11.♘h4 ♘g6 12.♘xg6 fxg6!** Note this recapture: Black agrees to spoil his pawn structure, but in return, includes the rook in the attack. **13.♗e2 a6 14.♗e3 h6 15.♖c1 g5 16.a3 ♕e8 17.b4 g4⇄** Mouroutis-A. Mastrovasilis, Patras 2000;

A33) **11.♗g5** ♘g6 12.♖c1 a6 13.♘e1 h6 14.♗d2 ♕e7 15.a3 ♘h7 16.♘d3 (Zamikhovsky-Sopkov, USSR 1952) 16...♔h8 (16...f5?! 17.♘c5!) 17.♕e2 f5!?⇄;

A34) **11.♘e1** a6 12.a4 ♘g6 13.♗e2 ♕e7 14.♘d3 h6 15.♗e3 ♗d7 16.f3 ♖ae8 17.♕b3 ♗c8 18.♖fc1 ♘f4 19.♗f1 ♘d7⇄ Gavrilov-Blatny, Pardubice 1995.

B) **9.h3**



A more cautious move: White wants to play e3-e4 but first, by way of prophylaxis, he prevents the opponent's bishop or knight coming to g4.

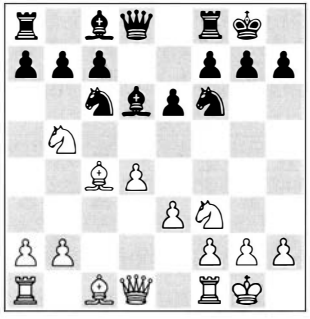
9...e5! 10.♕c2 ♕e7 Black does not want to give his opponent an isolated pawn on d4, because in this case, he would have to reckon with the threats of ♗g5 and ♖e1:

B1) **11.♗d2 ♗d7 12.♖ae1** 'White's idea is becoming clear. Having played the prophylactic h3, he concentrates all his forces in the centre. It is clear that now the exchange e5xd4 is completely unfavourable for Black. White wants, at the appropriate moment, after a double

exchange on e5, rapidly to push his e- and f-pawns, sweeping the enemy minor pieces from the centre and creating a decisive attack on the king' – Lipnitsky. **12...♖ae8** 12...h6!?. **13.♘g5 g6 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15.♗b3?!** 15.♗e2 h6 16.♘ge4 ♘xe4 17.♘xe4 ♗f5⇄. **15...c5! 16.f4 c4 17.fxe5 ♕xe5 18.♘f3 cxb3 19.♘xe5 bxc2 20.♘xd7 ♘xd7±** Bolbochan-Pachman, Helsinki 1952;

B2) **11.a3 ♗d7 12.d5 ♘a5 13.♗d3 c5** Defending against b2-b4 and creating counterplay on the queenside. **14.dxc6** 14.♘d2!?. **14...♘xc6 15.♖d1 ♖ac8 16.♗d2 h6 17.♖ac1 ♖fd8 18.♕b1 ♗e6⇄** Naer-Fressinet, Germany Bundesliga 2009/10 (see also Game 25).

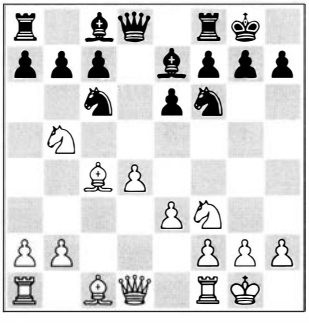
Back to the game.



9...♗e7

Having learnt from bitter experience, Fischer does not want to part with his dark-squared bishop this time. **9...e5** is insufficient for equality because of **10.dxe5!** (10.♘xd6 cxd6 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.b4!? ♕c7⇄) **10...♗xe5** (10...♘xe5 11.♘xd6 cxd6 12.♗e2 ♖e8 13.b3 ♗g4 14.h3 ♗h5 15.♗b2± Cruz-Emma, Punta del Este 1964) **11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.♗e2 c6 13.♘d6 ♕c7 14.♘xc8 ♖axc8 15.h3 ♖cd8 16.♕c2±** Milev-Kostov, Sofia 1960.

Lipnitsky considered **9...♕e7** to be Black's strongest reply, giving up the bishop but strengthening the central position. Later, Gligoric placed this assessment in doubt, although it is probably possible to improve Black's defence. However, Black has avoided that line for a long time now, preferring to retreat the bishop to e7. Thus, **10.b3!?** Opening a path for the bishop to b2 or maybe a3. Direct play in the centre promises White little: 10.♘xd6 cxd6 11.♖e1 e5! 12.d5 ♘a5 13.♗f1 e4 14.♗d2 exf3 15.♗xa5 fxg2 16.♗xg2 ♘g4 17.♕f3 f5⇄ Kogan-Chistiakov, Moscow 1952; 10.♗d2 ♘e4 11.♗e1 e5 12.dxe5 ♗xe5! 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.♗e2 (Bannik-Cherepkov, Riga 1952) 14...c5!? 15.f3 a6⇄. **10...e5** Possibly Black should not rush with this thematic advance; it was worth considering 10...♗d7!? 11.♘xd6 cxd6 12.♗a3 a5⇄. **11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xd6 cxd6 13.♗e2 ♗g4 14.♗b2 ♘xf3+ 15.♗xf3 ♗xf3 16.♕xf3±** Gligoric-Barle, Ljubljana/Portoroz 1973.



10.h3

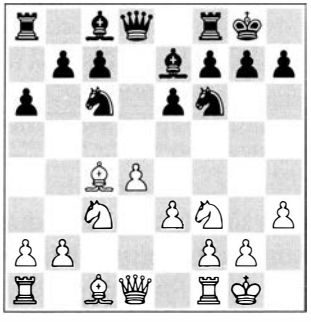
As we have already convinced ourselves, it is useful for White to take control of g4, if he wishes to carry out the plan with e3-e4.

10.♘e5 is harmless because of 10...♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♘d7 (11...♘d5!?)

12.f4 a6 13.♘c3 b5 14.♕f3 ♖b8 15.♗b3 ♗b7 16.♕h3 c5 17.♖d1 c4 18.♗c2 g6± Bannik-Klavins, Riga 1952.

Worth consideration is **10.♕c2!?**, freeing the d1-square for the rook. Then possible is **10...a6 11.♘c3 ♗d6 12.♖d1 ♕e8** Less good is 12...♕e7 13.e4 e5 because of the standard pin 14.♗g5! with the unpleasant threat of ♘d5. In the following game, Black did not cope with the challenge and should have lost quickly: 14...♘b4 15.♕b3! exd4 16.♖xd4 b5 17.♘d5 ♕d7 (Khurtsidze-Voiska, Vrnjacka Banja 1996) 18.♘xf6+ gxf6 19.♗xf6 bxc4 20.♕e3 ♕g4 21.e5 ♕h5 22.exd6+−. **13.a3 e5 14.♘g5!** Another standard manoeuvre: by creating the threat of ♘d5, White wins the fight for the point e4. **14...h6 15.♘ge4 ♘xe4 16.♘xe4 ♕e7 17.d5 ♘d8 18.♘xd6 cxd6 19.a4±** Hillarp Persson-Arutinian, Heraklion 2007. White has seized the initiative on the queenside, whilst on the king's wing, it is hard for Black to create real threats – two pairs of minor pieces have already been exchanged and he has nothing with which to attack.

10...a6 11.♘c3



11...♗d6?!

A few months later, Fischer improved Black's play: **11...b5! 12.♗d3 ♗b7** I think that 12...♘b4!? 13.♗e2 ♗b7 14.a3 ♘bd5⇄ is even more accurate here. **13.♕e2 ♗d6 14.♖d1 ♕e7 15.♗b1** In reply to the immediate 15.e4 Gligoric rightly feared 15...e5 16.d5 ♘d4∓. **15...e5 16.d5** (Gligoric-Fischer, Leipzig 1960), and here Black has a strong reply, which quashes any talk of a white advantage: **16...b4! 17.dxc6** 17.♘a4? e4! 18.dxc6 ♗xc6∓. **17...♗xc6 18.♗d2** The knight has no retreat and Black is not in a hurry to take it. **18...e4! 19.♘d4 ♕e5 20.g3 bxc3 21.♗xc3 ♗d7** with sufficient counterchances.

12.e4 e5 13.♗e3

Ever since the pre-computer era, there has been no change in the verdict that after **13.d5 ♘e7 14.♖e1 ♘g6** Black has excellent prospects on the kingside.



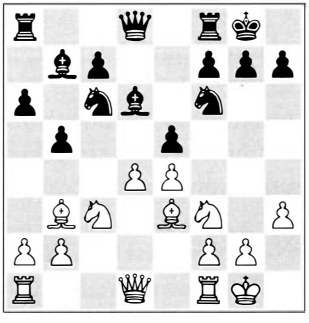
Analysis diagram

But in our day, nobody has tested this position at the highest level. This is how one old GM game went: **15.♗f1 ♗d7 16.a4 h6 17.♗e3 ♘h7 18.a5** Whilst Black regroups his forces in the far corner, White seizes space on the queenside. **18...♕f6 19.g3 ♖fe8 20.♗g2 ♘g5 21.♘xg5 hxg5 22.♕h5!** It seems that Black has played very logi-

cally, yet he has problems with the g5 pawn. In order not to have to go over wholly to defence, he sacrificed a knight: **22...♘f4!? 23.gxf4 gxf4 24.♗d2 g6 25.♕f3 ♔g7 26.♔f1**, Reshevsky-Rubinetti, Palma de Mallorca 1970. The white king flees to the queenside and with the centre closed, this should not pose him too many problems. In my opinion, Black does not have sufficient compensation for the piece (although the game itself ended in a draw).

13...exd4

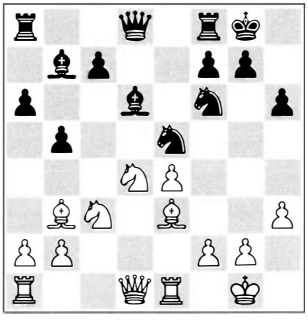
Stronger is **13...b5!**, not yet defining the situation in the centre. Black wants to force d4-d5, in order then to attack the enemy centre with ...c7-c6. Then there could follow **14.♗b3** 14.♗d5 ♘xd5 15.exd5 exd4 16.♘xd4 ♘xd4 17.♕xd4 ♖e8, and Black's chances, at a minimum, are not worse; 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♗xe5 16.♗b3 ♗b7 17.♗c5 (Göhring-Sonntag, Germany Bundesliga 1988/89) 17...♖e8 18.f3 ♘d7 19.♗f2 c5 20.♗d5 ♗xd5 21.♕xd5 ♕c7⇄. **14...♗b7**:



Analysis diagram

A) **15.d5 ♘a5 16.♘d2** 16.♗c2 ♘c4 17.♗c1 h6 18.♕e2 (Osnos-Chistiakov, Orel 1966) 18...c6 19.dxc6 ♗xc6 20.a4 ♕c7⇄. **16...♘xb3 17.♕xb3** (Panno-Reshevsky, Palma de Mallorca 1970) **17...c6! 18.dxc6 ♗xc6 19.♖fd1 ♕e7⇄** In both cases, Black has achieved adequate play thanks to the thematic break ...c7-c6;

B) **15.♖e1 h6 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♘d4!?** An interesting pawn sacrifice; Black is fine after 17.♗d4 ♘fd7 18.♘xe5 ♗xe5 19.a4 c6 20.axb5 axb5 21.♖xa8 ♗xa8 22.♗xe5 ♘xe5 23.♕e2 ♕g5 24.♖d1 ♗b7 25.♔h2 ♗c8⇄ Akesson-Mitkov, Lisbon 2000.



Analysis diagram

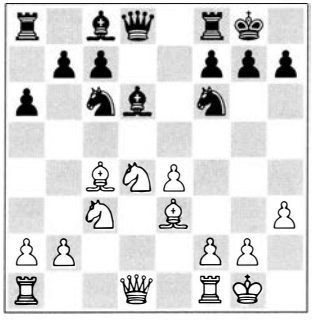
17...b4?! 18.♘d5 ♘xd5 19.♗xd5 ♗xd5 20.exd5 ♕f6 21.♕c2 ♖fe8 22.♖ad1 ♖ad8 23.♘f5± Hort-Langeweg, Amsterdam 1982.

Let us return to the position in the previous diagram. I think Black was wrong not to take the pawn: **17...♘xe4! 18.♘xe4 ♗xe4 19.♗f4 ♘d3! 20.♗xd6 ♘xe1 21.♗xf8** He is losing after 21.♕xe1? ♖e8 22.♗c5 ♕g5. **21...♘d3 22.♘e6!** Now it is White who needs to display some ingenuity, in order to maintain the balance; weaker is 22.♗xg7 ♕g5 23.♕g4 ♕xg4 24.hxg4 ♔xg7∓. **22...fxe6 23.♕g4 ♕xf8 24.♕xe6+ ♔h8 25.♕xe4 ♕xf2+ 26.♔h2** 26.♔h1 ♖d8 27.♖d1 ♕d4 28.♕xd4 ♖xd4∓, and thanks to the threat of ...♘f2+ Black manages to play ...c5-c4 and defend the knight, keeping

an extra pawn. **26...♕f4+** He must force transition into an endgame, since after 26...♖d8? 27.♖d1 Black loses the pinned knight. **27.♕xf4 ♘xf4 28.♖c1 ♘d3 29.♖xc7 ♘xb2=**.

14.♘xd4

The move **14.♗xd4** will be examined later in the game Gulko-Dvoretsky.



14...♗d7?!

Black should exchange a pair of pieces and get his queenside pawns moving: **14...♘xd4 15.♗xd4** In reply to 15.♕xd4, Black creates pressure against the enemy pawn centre: 15...♖e8 16.f4 (16.♖ad1 ♕e7 17.f3 ♗e6⇄) 16...b5 17.♗d5 c5 18.♕d3 ♘xd5 19.♕xd5 ♗e6⇄. **15...b5** Somewhat weaker, although also playable, is 15...c5 16.♗xf6! (16.♗e3 b5 17.♗d3 ♗b7 18.f4 c4 19.♗c2 b4⇄ Kozma-Trapl, Prague 1963) 16...♕xf6 17.f4 ♕d4+! 18.♔h1 (18.♕xd4 cxd4 19.♘d5 ♗e6⇄) 18...♗xf4!? 19.♖xf4 ♕xc4 20.♘d5 ♗e6 (he must give up the exchange, since after 20...♕d4? there is the very unpleasant 21.♕h5 with the threat of ♘e7+ and ♕xh7+) 21.♘b6 ♕b4 22.♘xa8 ♖xa8⩲. Later, by advancing his queenside pawns, Black obtains good counterplay. But 15...b5 is even stronger. **16.♗e2** Dvoretsky says that he showed this position to the pupils of the Botvinnik chess school, and in reply to 16.e5, 12-year old Garry Kasparov suggested the brilliant counter-blow 16...c5!. The advantage goes to Black, e.g.: 17.exf6 cxd4 18.fxg7 ♖e8 19.♗d5 dxc3 20.♗xa8 cxb2 21.♖b1 ♕f6∓. **16...c5 17.♗e3 ♗b7 18.e5 ♗xe5 19.♗xc5 ♖e8±** draw, Kozma-Estrin, Polanica Zdroj 1971.

15.♖e1 ♕e7?!

A serious mistake, after which Black comes under the familiar and highly unpleasant pin. He should have played **15...♖e8**, creating pressure against the e4 pawn and making it as hard as possible for the opponent to advance his central pawns.

16.♗g5!



Black's position has suddenly become difficult – how is he to prevent the white knight jump into d5?

16...♘xd4?

The third bad move in a row places Black on the edge of defeat. The only defence was **16...♗e5**, but here too, after 17.♘d5 ♕d6 18.♘f3! it is very hard for Black to disentangle his pieces. It seems that the best he has is 18...♖ae8 19.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 20.♗xf6, and here he

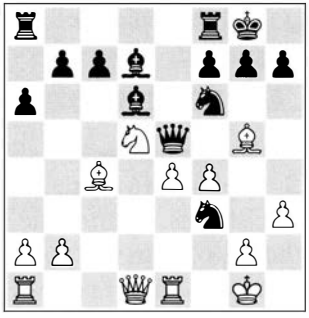
has to recapture the bishop with the pawn, spoiling his kingside pawn formation.

17.♘d5! ♕e5 18.f4

'I recall that at this moment, I expected my powerful opponent to resign at once' – Taimanov.

18...♘f3+

'Fischer's inventiveness is well-known, but even this creative move should not have saved him' – Taimanov.



19.♕xf3?

'Evidently, it was the nervous tension of being so close to winning that led to this mistake. Otherwise, I cannot to this day find another explanation of why I did not play **19.gxf3**. A simple analysis confirms that this move deprives my opponent of any chance of saving the game' – Taimanov.

Indeed, no defence is apparent for Black, e.g. **19...♕xb2** 19...♗c5+ 20.♔h1 ♕d4 21.♗xf6 gxf6 22.♕xd4 ♗xd4 23.♖ad1+−. **20.♖e2 ♗c5+** 20...♕a3 21.♘xf6+ gxf6 22.♗xf6 ♗xh3 23.♕d5! h6 24.♕h5 ♕c5+ 25.♕xc5 ♗xc5+ 26.♔h2+−. **21.♔h2 ♕d4 22.♗xf6 gxf6 23.♕xd4 ♗xd4 24.♖d1 c5 25.♖xd4 cxd4 26.♘xf6+ ♔g7 27.♘xd7** etc.

Mark Dvoretsky, in his theoretical notebook, reveals the psychological basis of White's mistake: 'In a good position, one usually does not want to calculate complications, such as arise after 19.gxf3, especially when, as here, Black retains counter-chances. There is no doubt that somewhere in these complications, White should win, but... In practice, a player often settles for a simpler continuation, which gives him a clear advantage and does not require calculation or give the opponent tactical counterchances. However, sometimes the excessive caution can just put additional difficulties in the way of the winning path. This is the case here – Fischer starts to defend very inventively, and in the end, he manages to neutralise White's advantage.'

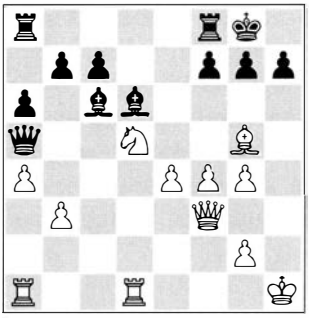
19...♕d4+ 20.♔h1 ♘g4?!

Fischer could probably sense his opponent's nervousness and tried to complicate the game as much as possible. The bishop was immune: 20...♕xc4? 21.♘xf6+! gxf6 22.♗xf6, and White's attack is irresistible: 22...♖fd8 23.e5 ♗b4 (23...♗c5 24.♖ac1) 24.♖e4 ♕c5 25.f5. However, it was objectively stronger to play 20...♘xd5 21.♗xd5 ♖ab8 22.b3±.

21.hxg4 ♕xc4 22.b3

This is the strongest continuation: White drives the enemy queen to the edge of the board and then centralises all of his pieces, and continues the attack. But it was also possible to force transition into a highly favourable ending: 22.e5!? ♗c6 23.♖ed1 ♗xd5 (23...♗c5 24.♖ac1 ♗xd5 25.♖xc4 ♗xf3 26.gxf3 ♗b6 27.♗e7 ♖fc8 28.♔g2±) 24.♕xd5 ♕xd5 25.♖xd5 f6 26.♗h4 fxe5 27.fxe5 ♗b4 28.a3±.

22...♕b5 23.a4 ♕a5 24.♖ed1 ♗c6



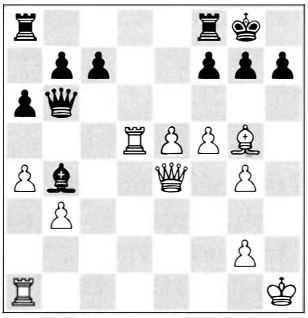
25.e5?!

Of course, Mark Evgenievich is right that White gets nothing from 25.♘e7+? ♗xe7 26.♗xe7 because of 26...♖fe8 27.b4 ♕b6 28.♗c5 ♗xe4!. However, very strong was 25.♗e7! ♗xd5 (he has to give up the queen for rook and knight, because after 25...♖fe8 26.b4 he loses his strongest piece for much less material) 26.♖xd5 ♕xd5 27.exd5 ♗xe7 28.g5± Black has a difficult position. First of all, it is not clear how he avoids being mated, once the white rook comes to the kingside.

25...♗b4 26.♕e4

Taimanov thought that it would be very difficult to realise the extra pawn after 26.♗e7 ♗xe7 27.♘xe7+ ♔h8 28.♘xc6 bxc6, because his king is weakened. However, the accurate move 29.♖ac1! underlines White's large advantage: he not only wins a pawn, but dominates in the centre. It is very hard for Black to get his queen back into the game, let alone to disturb the king on h1.

26...♗xd5 27.♖xd5 ♕b6 28.f5



'It seems that White's attack is again assuming threatening dimensions, but Fischer tirelessly seeks out active resources to deflect his opponent from carrying out his plan of attack' – Taimanov.

28...♗c3!? 29.♖c1 ♗b2 30.♖b1?!

Significantly stronger was 30.a5! ♕xb3 31.♖xc7 ♕g3 32.f6 with extremely dangerous threats against the enemy king. White also keeps this possibility in what follows.

30...♗c3 31.♖c1 ♗b2 32.♖c4

White should have chosen between 32.a5 and 32.♖c2!? ♕xb3 33.♖xc7.

32...♖ae8



Black dreams of playing ...f7-f6 and breaking his bonds.

33.f6?!

A tempting move, but now Black can take the initiative. Much stronger was 33.♗e3! ♕xb3 34.♖xc7. The rook has penetrated to the seventh rank and White now only needs to seize the diagonal a1-h8 and play e5-e6. It is not clear Black how can oppose this simple plan.

33...c6

Better was 33...♖e6!, maintaining control over the 6th rank.

34.fxg7 cxd5 35.gxf8♕+ ♔xf8

After 35...♖xf8? 36.♕xd5 ♕xb3 37.♗f6 the black king is in danger. He needs room to escape the danger zone.

36.♕xh7 ♗xe5

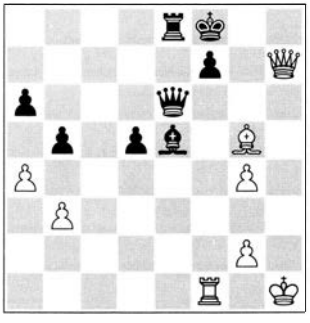
Mate was threatened on h8.

37.♖f4! ♕e6

Stronger was 37...♗g7, opening a line for the rook and reminding White that he also has a king. Then there could follow 38.♖f5 ♖e1+ 39.♔h2 ♕e6 40.♗f4 d4 with mutual chances.

38.♖f1 b5?

This move could have led to immediate defeat. Nor is 38...♗g7? any better, because of 39.♗c1 ♕e7 40.g5! ♕b4 41.♗b2+–, but after the correct 38...♗c3! 39.♗c1 ♔e7 the king escapes from the bombardment.



39.axb5?

'How careful one must be about playing "natural" moves! In trying to save time making it to move 40, White squanders the lion's share of his advantage. He should have strengthened the pressure with the manoeuvre noted earlier, 39.♖e1!, and the pin on the e-file could bring Black serious troubles' – Taimanov.

The computer cannot see any defence at all after this. Black's best is to give up the exchange by means of 39...♖e7, but it is clear that after this, the struggle will not last much longer.

39...axb5 40.♗d2

Taimanov had missed that now, with the a-file open, 40.♖e1 is met by 40...♖a8! 41.♗h6+ ♔e7 42.♗g7 ♖a1! exchanging rooks and equalising.

40...♔e7!



'At this moment, Fischer breathed a sigh of relief – both time-trouble and his major dangers are behind him. In addition, the game was adjourned, and there was the pleasant prospect of being able to assess the situation in the quiet of home analysis' – Taimanov.

41.♗b4+

'This was the sealed move, and after returning to the hotel and hurriedly setting the position up on the board, it was not difficult to conclude with disappointment that there was no great cause for optimism remaining... The black king is out of the danger zone, and suddenly it is the opponent's king which is under threat from ...♖h8. In a word, it became clear that a draw was the most likely outcome of this grand battle' – Taimanov.

41...♔d8 42.♖xf7

White could have forced a draw with 42.♗a5+ ♔c8 43.♖xf7 ♖h8 44.♖c7+ ♔b8 45.♖b7+, but preferred to continue the battle.

42...♖h8 43.♖f8+ ♖xf8 44.♗xf8 ♕f6!

The bishop is attacked and a deadly check is threatened on f1. White's reply is forced.

45.♗c5 d4?!

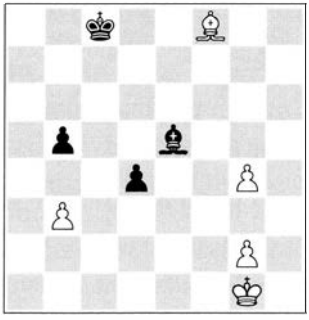
Fischer is carried away by the heat of battle and over-estimates his chances and once again falls into a difficult position. He could draw without any problems by 45...♕f1+ 46.♗g1 ♗d4 47.♕h2 ♔d7.

46.♔g1!

Black probably overlooked this move. Now there is no longer a mate, nor checks, and White retains an extra pawn. Black needs to go over to defence again.

46...♕f4 47.♕e7+ ♔c8 48.♕f8+ ♕xf8 49.♗xf8

'As a result of the tactical complications, we have a bishop endgame, where Black's chances of a draw look more realistic than White's chances of winning. But it was at this moment that Fischer stopped thinking and started playing quickly and accurately, like a computer that had been programmed with the position' – Taimanov.



49...♗g3 50.♔f1 d3!

First Black restricts the white king. Whilst White is 'digging out' the black bishop, Black activates his own king.

51.♗b4 ♔d7 52.♗e1 ♗f4 53.♗c3 ♗g3 54.g5 ♔e6 55.g6 ♔e7 56.♗e1 ♗f4 57.♗h4+ ♔f8 58.g3 ♗d6 59.♔f2 ♗c5+ 60.♔f3 ♔g7 61.♗g5 ♔xg6 62.♗f4 ♔h5

It appears that Black also holds after 62...♔f5 63.g4+ ♔f6 64.♔e4 ♗d6 65.♗d2 ♗c5 66.♔xd3 ♔e5, but the text move, after which the king gets to g4, looks more accurate.

63.♔e4 ♔g4 64.♔xd3

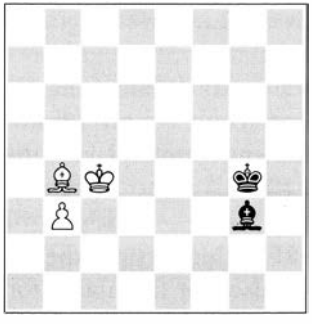


'Thus, another stage has ended in this instructive bishop ending. White has an extra and outside passed g-pawn, which ties down the black king, and it seems as though after the inevitable exchange of this for the black b-pawn, White will have real winning chances, because of the distance of the black king from the main area of the battle. Alas, this impression is deceptive, and, unlike me, Fischer knew exactly that the resulting position was a draw' – Taimanov.

64...♔f3! 65.♗c7 ♗f2 66.♗d6 ♗e1 67.♔d4 ♔g4 68.♔c5 b4 69.♔b5 ♔f5 70.♔c4 ♔e6 71.♗c7 ♔f5 72.♔d3 ♔g4

It is important for Black to prevent the manoeuvre ♔d3-e2-f3, as a result of which White could advance his passed pawn.

73.♗d6 ♗c3 74.♔c4 ♗e1 75.♗xb4 ♗xg3

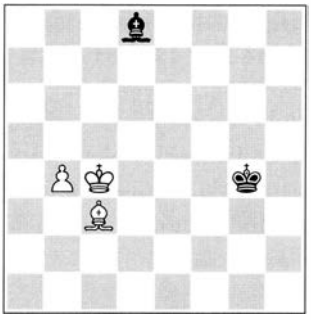


This position is theoretically drawn, and Fischer demonstrates the most precise method.

76.♗c3 ♗d6 77.♔d5 ♗e7 78.♗d4 ♗b4

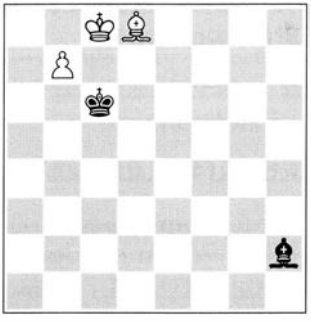
White wants to play 79.♗c5, after which the pawn cannot be stopped from getting to b5.

79.♔c4 ♗a5 80.♗c3 ♗d8 81.b4



'In such endings, the black bishop tries to control the square, through which the enemy pawn will have to pass, whilst White tries to drive the bishop off or interfere with his own bishop. Preventing this interference (which is the main method of play in such positions) can only be done with the help of the black king' – Taimanov.

Endings of this type (and this exact position) are analysed in detail in most endgame textbooks. Dvoretsky, for example, recommends familiarising oneself with the following Centurini study from La Régence 1856:

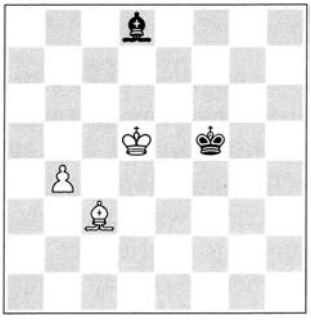


White to play and win

1.♗h4 ♔b6 1...♗e5 2.♗f6 ♗h2 3.♗d4 ♗g3 4.♗a7 ♗f4 5.♗b8 ♗e3 6.♗h2 ♗a7 7.♗g1+–. **2.♗f2 ♔a6** 2...♔c6 3.♗a7 ♗g3 4.♗b8 ♗f2 5.♗h2 ♗a7

6.♗g1+−. **3.♗c5!** 3.♗d4? ♗d6! 4.♗f6 ♔b5 5.♗d8 ♔c6 6.♗e7 ♗h2=. **3...♗g3 4.♗e7 ♔b6 5.♗d8 ♔c6 6.♗h4 ♗h2 7.♗f2 ♔b5 8.♗a7 ♔a6 9.♗b8 ♗g1 10.♗f4 ♗a7 11.♗e3** 1-0.

and the ending of the game Capablanca-Janowski, New York 1916, where Janowski panicked and resigned the following position.



where 83...♔f4! would have drawn.

81...♔f4!

At this moment, when White is ready to drive the enemy bishop from b6 or c7, the black king approaches the passed pawn from behind.

82.b5 ♔e4 83.♗d4 ♗c7 84.♔c5 ♔d3! 85.♔c6 ♔c4!

The rear approach is completed, and now the draw is obvious.

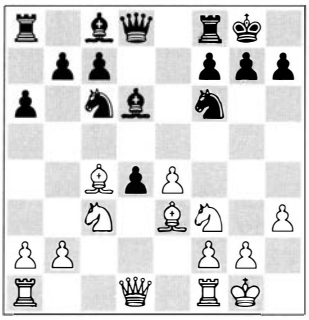
86.♗b6 ♗f4 87.♗a7 ♗c7

Draw.

Game 35
Gulko,Boris
Dvoretsky,Mark
Yerevan 1975

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 d5 5.e3 0-0 6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.0-0 a6 8.h3 dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♗d6 10.e4 e5 11.♗e3 exd4

As shown in the notes to the previous game, **11...b5** is stronger in this position (which was reached via a different move-order in Taimanov-Fischer).



12.♗xd4!

An improvement on Taimanov-Fischer. However, even here, the situation is far from tragic for Black.

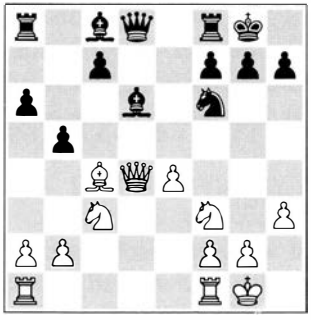
12...♘xd4?!

Better was **12...b5!**, strengthening the pressure on the white centre and not allowing him to stabilise the situation. Then there could follow **13.♗b3** Black has sufficient counterplay in the variation 13.e5 ♘xd4 14.♕xd4 bxc4 15.exd6 cxd6 16.♕xc4 ♖b8⇄. **13...♖e8!** In this version, the exchange on d4 is also not favourable for Black: 13...♘xd4?! 14.♕xd4 c5 15.♕e3 c4 16.♗c2 (Lukacs-Lauber, Gyula 1997) 16...♗b7 (16...b4 17.♘a4 ♗b7 18.♖ad1±) 17.e5 ♗xf3 18.gxf3 ♖e8 19.f4 ♗b4 20.♖fd1 – Black has a very suspicious position. **14.♘g5** 14.e5 ♗xe5 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.♖e1 ♕d6=. **14...♗e6 15.♘xe6 fxe6 16.e5** 16.♗e3 ♘a5 17.♗c2 ♘c4⇄. **16...♗xe5 17.♗xe5 ♕xd1 18.♖axd1 ♘xe5**

19.♖fe1 ♘f7 20.♗xe6 ♔f8 – White is a little better, but Black probably should hold.

13.♕xd4 b5

Insufficient for equality is **13...♗f4** 14.♕xd8 ♖xd8 15.♖ad1 (15.g3 ♗h6 16.g4 b5⇄) 15...♗e6 16.♗xe6 fxe6 17.g3 ♗h6 18.e5 ♘d5 19.♘e4±. Black's bishop is badly-placed and the e6 pawn weak.



14.e5?

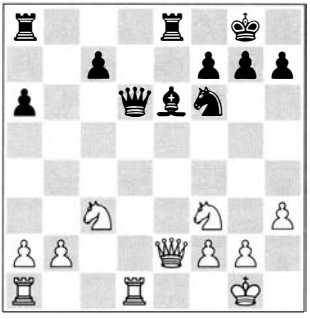
The advantage could be retained by **14.♗b3! c5 15.♕e3** – see 12...b5 13.♗b3 ♘xd4?! 14.♕xd4 c5 15.♕e3. 'My opponent's mistake is an example of the well-known chess/psychological principle that a threat (in this case e4-e5) is often stronger than its execution' – Dvoretsky.

14...bxc4 15.exd6 ♕xd6

'Having survived a slight shock in the opening, I was so pleased that I immediately relaxed and committed a significant mistake. Even though the queenside pawns are broken, it was essential at all costs to hang onto the active pawn on c4, which fixes White's weakness on b2. After 15...♗e6 the chances are approximately equal' – Dvoretsky.

Another method of creating counterplay also deserved attention: 15...cxd6 16.♕xc4 ♖b8 17.b3 ♗b7⇄. However, even after the text, Black can obtain adequate play.

16.♕xc4 ♗e6 17.♕e2 ♖fe8 18.♖fd1



18...♕c5?!

The start of an incorrect plan: Black directs his queen to the kingside, where she has nothing in particular to do. Instead of the game continuation, 18...♕b4!? 19.♕c2 h6 was worth consideration, with the idea of pushing the pawn to c4 and creating pressure on the queenside.

19.♕d2 ♕h5 20.♕f4!

Defending against the threat of 20...♗xh3 and strengthening the central position at the same time.

20...c5 21.♖d2

A solid prophylactic move. It was probably also possible to play a little more actively with 21.♖d6!? ♖ab8 22.b3.

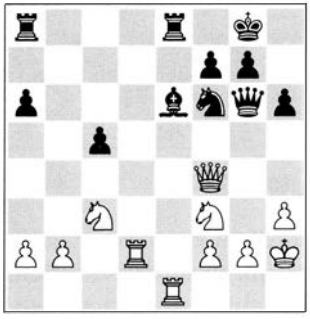
21...h6 22.♖e1 ♕g6

It was better to meet the threat of 23.♖e5 by means of 22...♕f5. Now after 23.♕d6 there is the unexpected blow 23...♗xa2! (23...♖ad8? 24.♕xd8

♖xd8 25.♖xd8+ ♔h7 26.♖d2 is clearly better for White) 24.♘xa2 (24.♘e5 ♖ac8!⇄) 24...♖xe1+ 25.♘xe1 ♕b1 26.♖e2 ♕xa2 27.♕xc5=. After the move in the game, White could have forced transition into the endgame, in a more favourable form.

23.♔h2

Stronger is 23.♘e5!, and after 23...♕f5 White can either exchange on f5 or play 24.♕e3 with the idea of f2-f4 and g2-g4.



23...♕f5!?

'Black's position is clearly worse. White's pieces are more active (Black must reckon with ♖e5 and ♕d6), and the black queenside pawns are weak. In such positions, it is important to find an idea, which can deflect the opponent from the natural strengthening of his position, and place some sort of problems in his way. I decided that in the ending with rooks, the black bishop should prove stronger than the knight, and this would to some extent offset the weakness of the pawns. In the middlegame, by contrast, the queen and knight cooperate better' – Dvoretsky.

24.♕xf5!

On 24.♕d6 there could follow a trick with which we are already familiar: 24...♗xa2! 25.♘xa2 (after 25.♖xe8+ ♘xe8 the white queen comes under attack and he is not able to move it away with tempo: 26.♕c6 ♖c8 27.♕xa6 ♗e6=) 25...♖xe1 26.♘xe1 ♕b1 – Black wins back the piece and obtains an equal game.

24...♗xf5 25.♖e5 ♖xe5 26.♘xe5 ♖e8 27.♘c4

Black faces very complicated problems. First of all, there is a threat of 28.♖d6 attacking the broken queenside pawns. Dvoretsky decides to part with one of them voluntarily, in order to activate his pieces as much as possible in compensation.

27...♔f8!?

Another method also deserved attention, namely to exchange a pair of knights and bring the bishop to b1, attacking the white pawns from behind: 27...♘e4!? 28.♘xe4 ♗xe4 29.♖d6 (29.f3 ♗b1 30.b3 g5 31.♔g3 ♔g7 32.♔f2 ♖e6) 29...♗b1 30.♖xa6 ♗d3! 31.b3 ♗xc4 32.bxc4 ♖e4 33.♖a4 f5⩲.

28.♖d6

28.♘d6!? ♖d8 29.♘a4 looks very unpleasant for Black.

28...♘e4 29.♘xe4 ♖xe4 30.♘e3 ♗e6 31.♖xa6 ♖d4



32.♖b6?!

Black has been counting on obtaining counterplay on the kingside after 32.b3 ♔e7, followed by ...f7-f5-f4. However, this is hard to achieve: 33.g4! h5 34.♔g3±, and White retains all the advantages of his position. In my opinion, Gulko's move is objectively weaker, although it contains a cunning trap.

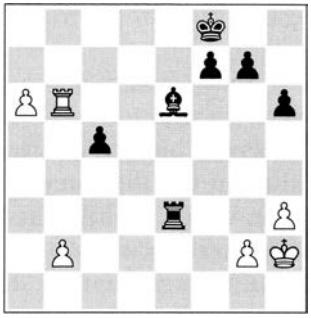
32...♖d2?!

Stronger was 32...♔e7 33.g4 ♔d7!, obtaining real drawing chances, e.g. 34.♘f5 ♗xf5 35.gxf5 ♖f4 etc.

33.a4 ♖xf2 34.a5 ♖e2?

Falling into the trap. Dvoretsky pointed out a much stronger continuation: **34...♖f4! 35.♖b5** White gets nothing from 35.b3 ♖f2, whilst after 35.b4? ♖xb4 the advantage swings to Black. **35...♔e7!** 35...♖e4 36.♘c2 ♖c4 37.♘a3 ♖a4 38.♖xc5±. **36.♔g3! ♖a4 37.♖xc5 ♖b4** It appears that Black can save himself here, albeit with great difficulty, e.g. **38.♘d1 ♔d6 39.♖c3 ♖a4** 39...♖b5!? is interesting, with the idea of forcing the pawn to a6 and only then attacking it from behind, whilst if White plays 40.♖a3, then Black transfers his king to a8 and remains with an active rook and bishop. **40.♖a3 ♖xa3+ 41.bxa3 ♔c5 42.♘c3 g5** 42...f5?! 43.♔f4±. **43.♘e4+ ♔b5 44.a6!? ♔b6** Here it has proved impossible to find a win: **45.♘f6 ♔xa6 46.♘g4** 46.♘g8 h5 47.h4 gxh4+ 48.♔xh4 ♔a5 49.♔xh5 ♔a4 – the black king manages to win the a-pawn and get across to help the bishop. **46...h5 47.♘f6 h4+ 48.♔f3 ♔a5 49.♘h7 g4+! 50.hxg4 ♗d5+ 51.♔f2 ♗e6 52.♘f6 ♔a4 53.♔g1 ♔xa3 54.♔h2 ♔b4 55.♔h3 ♔c5 56.♔xh4 ♔d4=.**

35.a6 ♖xe3

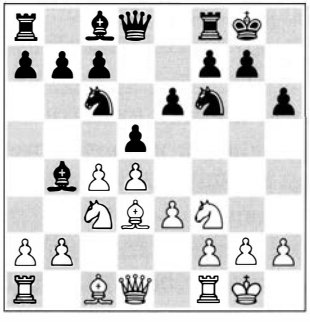


36.♖b8+! ♔e7 37.♖b7+!

The rook closes the long diagonal with check, after which the a6 pawn is unstoppable. Black resigned.

Game 36
Keres,Paul
Lipnitsky,Isaak
Moscow 1951

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0 h6



'The gambit variation **7...dxc4 8.♗xc4 ♗d6 9.♗b5 e5 10.♗xc6 exd4** has only one drawback: White can decline it, by playing **11.exd4 bxc6 12.♗g5**. In this case, it is not easy for Black to complicate the game. But this variation is fully

adequate for playing for a draw. The move 7...h6 preserves the tension. Its point is to defend the g5-square in advance, against raids by the white pieces' – Lipnitsky.

Of course, this is a very optimistic assessment of the variation from the black point of view: if his only problem was that White can dry the game up, then the Ragozin would probably have even more supporters! In my opinion, the move 7...h6 is more cunning than the immediate exchange on c4, since for the moment, Black keeps his plans hidden, but the move **7...a6** is a more useful way of doing the same thing, and we will look at this move later.

8.h3

White meets fire with fire, by covering the g4-square. He also has another logical plan – to put the rook on d1, in order to prevent the later advance ...e6-e5. This is how the game might continue in this case: **8.♕e2** a6 9.♖d1 ♕e7 10.♘e5 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♘d7 12.f4 ♘b6 13.cxd5 exd5 (Hort-Sofrevski, Stip 1977) 14.♗c2!? ♖d8 15.a3 ♗xc3 16.♕d3! g6 17.♕xc3±.

8...dxc4

'There was no need to hurry with this exchange. Further waiting moves, such as 8...a6 or 8...♕e7, were interesting here' – Lipnitsky.

The tense position arising after **8...a6** has not thus far been explored sufficiently deeply. We will look at this more in the context of the game Vaisser-Gulko.

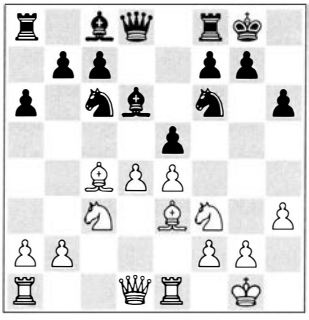
9.♗xc4 ♗d6 10.e4 e5 11.♗e3

We have seen this set-up several times already: having secured himself against a knight or bishop jump to g4, White continues to reinforce his centre.

11...a6

An important prophylactic move. Black defends the square b5 and also prepares a fianchetto after b7-b5.

12.♖e1



12...♗d7

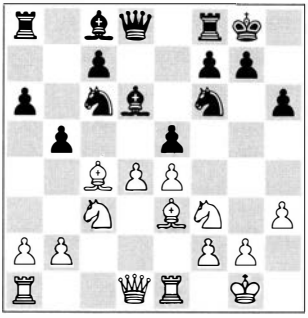
'We have already drawn attention to this frequently-seen mistake in similar positions. The move 12...♗d7 is justified in the context of a light-square strategy, but once Black has allowed his opponent to establish a pawn and piece centre, such as here, he should seek to attack it at once. This could be achieved by means of 12...b5! and 13...♗b7' – Lipnitsky.

Let us look at this recommendation in more detail. 'An interesting detail. Notwithstanding that the h3-c8 diagonal is open for the bishop, it turns out that in this position, it should go to b7, from where the bishop will be more active (pressure against e4)' – Lipnitsky.

We recommended this move in the note to move 13 of Taimanov-Fischer. The only difference between the two positions is that here White has played ♖e1, and Black ...h7-h6. Black has probably

benefited more from this, since he no longer needs fear ♘g5 or ♗g5.

12...b5



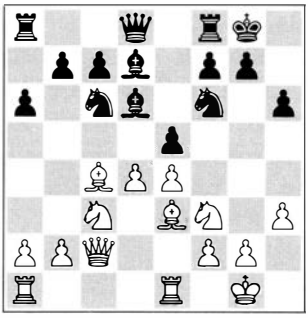
Analysis diagram

13.♗b3 ♗b7 14.d5 After 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15.♘d4 we reach a position from the game Hort-Langeweg, Amsterdam 1982, looked at in the note to the 13th move in Taimanov-Fischer. As we already know, Black should take the pawn with 15...♘xe4!. **14...♘a5** Black's standard plan consists of advancing ...c7-c6. there could follow: **15.♘d2** 15.♗c2 ♘c4 16.♗c1 c6⇄. **15...c6 16.dxc6 ♗xc6 17.♗c2 ♖c8 18.a3 ♗b7 19.♘e2 ♗c5⇄** Atalik-Miladinovic, Ano Liosia 1995.

I think Lipnitsky is too critical of his last move. Black is still maintaining the tension perfectly well. Yes, White has some small opening advantage, but no more than that.

13.♕c2

White did not play very well in the following game – he hurried to close the centre, after which his opponent was able to create counterplay on both flanks at once: **13.a3** ♕c8 14.♖c1 ♖e8 15.d5 ♘e7 16.♗f1 ♕d8 17.♘d2 ♘g6 18.a4 ♕e7 19.♘c4 ♗b4 20.♕c2 b5 21.♘d2 ♖ab8⇄ Lautier-Mitkov, Batumi 1999.



'The opening has gone in White's favour. He has a clear superiority in the centre and his strategic plan is therefore quite simple. He threatens to strengthen the position of his pieces still further (e.g. ♖ad1), and then after suitable preparation to exchange twice on e5 and play f2-f4. Black, whose 12th move deprived him of the opportunity to attack the white centre, experiences definite problems in creating counterplay' – Lipnitsky.

13...♖e8

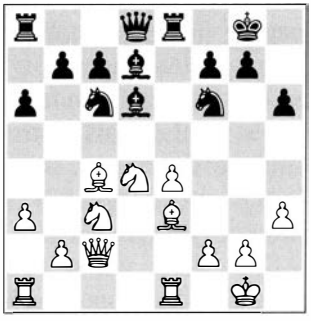
Lipnitsky awards this a question mark and adds the comment: 'In many games, one can observe a strange rule – one mistake immediately follows another. But this is quite easy to explain – the first mistake worsens the position, which complicates the player's task, leading to a further mistake.'

Instead of the text, Lipnitsky recommends **13...b5** with the idea of simplifying the position after 14.♗f1 exd4 15.♘xd4 ♘xd4 16.♗xd4 c5. Indeed, in this case Black's chances are not worse, but the preliminary exchange on e5 is stronger: 14.dxe5! ♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♗xe5 16.♗d3±. Then White will bring his rook to d1 and prepare f2-f4, seizing the centre. It is not easy for Black to defend.

If Black is striving for simplification, then he should exchange on d4 at once:

13...exd4 14.♘xd4 (Black has sufficient counterplay after 14.♗xd4 b5 15.♗f1 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4 b4) 14...♘xd4 15.♗xd4 b5 16.♗d5 ♘xd5 17.♘xd5 ♗e6 with mutual chances. But the text move, in my opinion, is also far from bad.

14.a3 exd4 15.♘xd4



15...♘e5

Here the knight is unstable. It probably made sense for Black to strengthen his position in the centre, by putting a pawn on c5: **15...♘xd4** 16.♗xd4 c5 17.♗e3 ♗c6 18.♖ad1 ♕c7⇄.

16.♗f1 ♘g6?!

Here too, it was worth considering **16...c5** 17.♘f5 ♗xf5 18.exf5 ♕c7, after which it is not easy for White to exploit the weakness of the light squares in the centre.

17.♖ad1 ♕e7 18.g3!

'White purposefully sets about preparing f2-f4, temporarily sacrificing a pawn in the process. Now the point of his 16th move is clear – the pawn on h3 is defended' – Lipnitsky.

18...♘xe4

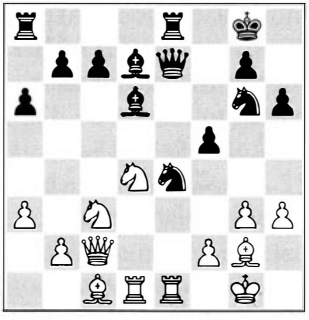
This attempt to muddy the waters could have ended in a quick collapse, but otherwise, White plays ♗g2 and advances f2-f4 at his leisure.

19.♗c1

A solid move, which retains the advantage, but the energetic blow 19.♗xh6! was even stronger, e.g. 19...f5 (or 19...gxh6 20.♘xe4 ♗e5 21.♘c5±) 20.♕b3+ ♔h8 21.♗c1±. Material is equal and Black's position is full of holes.

19...f5 20.♗g2!

'Subtly played! After 20.f3 ♗xg3 21.fxe4 ♗xe1 22.♖xe1 White gets two pieces for rook and two pawns, but the open position of his king gives Black counterchances. Now, however, White regains the pawn and gets strong pressure along the open lines' – Lipnitsky.



20...♘e5 21.♘xf5

Even more precise was 21.♘xe4 fxe4 22.♗xe4±, after which White has a mass of threats, the main one of which is f2-f4 and ♗e4xb7.

21...♗xf5 22.♘xe4 ♘f7

'Black covers his king, meeting the threat of ♕b3+ and ♕xb7, and at the same time, pins the knight on e4' – Lipnitsky.

Black has managed to beat off the first wave of the attack, but his position re-

mains bad: his king is weak, the ♘f7 is very badly placed, and White's pieces are very harmoniously placed, controlling the centre and cooperating excellently with one another.

23.♕b3!

White unpins his knight and pins the enemy knight, attacking the b7 pawn in the process.

23...♖ab8



24.♗d2

Keres continues to strengthen his position and not hurry, although there was a very strong immediate blow available in 24.♘xd6!? ♕xe1+ 25.♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 26.♔h2 cxd6 27.♗e3. The black rooks are separated, and his king very weak, whilst White's queen and bishop pair dominate the board.

24...♕e6

More tenacious is 24...♗e6, although even here, after 25.♕c2 ♗f5 26.♕c1 ♕d7 27.♘xd6 ♘xd6 28.♗f4 White keeps the advantage: his bishops exert unpleasant pressure on the opponent's queenside.

25.♕xe6 ♖xe6 26.♘xd6 cxd6

He loses after 26...♖xe1+ 27.♖xe1 ♘xd6 28.♖e7 ♘e8 29.♗d5+ ♔h8 30.g4 ♗c2 31.♗c3, whilst after 26...♖xd6 27.♗f4± White's advantage is also not in doubt.



27.♗d5!

Thanks to this move, White will penetrate to the 7th rank with his rooks along one of the open lines.

27...♖xe1+ 28.♖xe1 ♔f8

The h3 pawn is poisoned – after 28...♗xh3? 29.♖e7 ♖f8 30.♖xb7 Black cannot unpin his knight.

29.♖c1 ♘d8

Here 29...♗xh3? is again bad because of 30.♖c7 ♘d8 31.♗f4.

30.♖c7 ♗e6

Nor does 30...♖c8 save him, on account of 31.♗a5 ♘c6 32.♖xb7! ♘xa5 33.♖f7+ ♔e8 34.♖xf5 with an extra pawn and an overwhelming position.

31.♗xe6 ♘xe6 32.♖d7 ♘g5

The attempt to escape into a rook ending a pawn down after 32...♘c5 33.♖xd6 ♘e4 is refuted by 34.♗f4!.

33.♗xg5 hxg5 34.♖xd6

Here, by contrast, Black is not only a pawn down, but the g5 pawn is hopelessly weak.

'It is obvious that Black does not have the slightest chance of saving himself. Therefore it was simpler to resign, but in time-trouble, it is often the case that a player has too little time even to get round to resigning' – Lipnitsky.

34...♖c8 35.♔g2 ♖c5 36.♖b6 ♖c7 37.♔f3 ♖f7+ 38.♔g4!

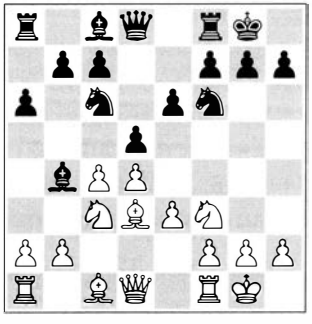
The most precise; White will win two pawns for the one he gives up.

38...♖xf2 39.♖xb7 ♖h2 40.a4 a5 41.♖b5

'The time-control is reached, and Black has time to resign. Keres excellently exploited his opponent's opening errors in the centre' – Lipnitsky.

Game 37
Ibragimov,Ildar
Gulko,Boris
St Louis 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0 a6



A useful preparatory move. Black plans, as usual, to exchange on c4 and bring his bishop to d6, and does not wish to allow his opponent to bring a knight or bishop to b5.

8.a3

By immediately challenging the bishop to reveal its plans, White drives it where it wants to go anyway. We will see the prophylactic move 8.h3 in the later game Vaisser-Gulko, whilst for now we will point out that the attempt to seize space on the queenside does not bring White any particular dividends: **8.c5!? b6 9.♘a4** 9.cxb6 cxb6 10.♗d2 ♗b7 11.♖c1 ♗d6 12.♘a4 ♘d7 13.♕e2 f5⇄ Cvetkovic-Mitkov, Vrnjacka Banja 1991 is completely harmless. **9...bxc5 10.dxc5 e5**:

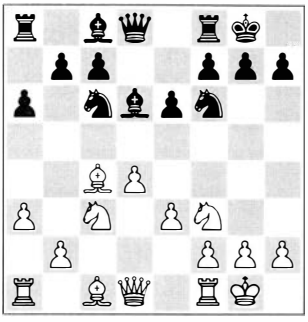


A) **11.a3** This move allows Black to exchange off two pairs of minor pieces, and equalise without any particular problem: 11...e4 12.♘d4 ♘xd4 13.exd4 exd3 14.axb4 ♗f5 15.♕f3 ♗e4 16.♕g3 ♖b8⇄ Guseinov-Timoshenko, Dubai 2000;

B) Probably White can fight for an advantage only by **11.♗e2!?**, removing the bishop from the potential fork, but here too, Black has sufficient resources to create counterplay: **11...♗a5** Also interesting is 11...♘e4 12.♕c2 ♗f5 13.♗d3 ♕f6 14.a3 ♖fb8!?⩲. **12.a3** It seems that the bishop is still trapped, but now Black plays his main trump: **12...e4!** The white knight now has various ways to go, but each has its disadvantages. **13.♘d4** 13.♘d2 ♗xd2 14.♗xd2 ♗e6⇄; 13.♘g5 h6 14.♘h3

♗xh3 15.gxh3 d4 16.exd4 ♘xd4 17.b4 ♕d7 18.♘c3 ♖ad8⇄; 13.♘h4 g5±. **13...♘xd4 14.exd4 c6⇄.**

8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♗d6



10.♕c2

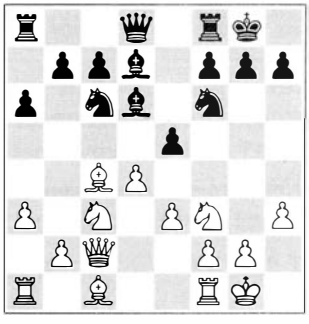
White's idea is to limit the bishop on c8, taking the f5-square away from him with the queen and g4 with the h-pawn. Of course, other set-ups have also been seen in this opening *tabiya*:

A) **10.h3 e5 11.d5 ♘e7 12.♕e2!?** White holds back the e3 pawn, so as to prevent the dangerous manoeuvre ...♘e7-g6-f4. **12...♘g6 13.♘d2 ♗d7 14.♖d1 ♕e7** Black wishes to push his pawn to e4 and then transfer the queen to e5, beginning an attack on the king. **15.♗d3 ♘e8** Opening the path of the f-pawn. **16.♗xg6 hxg6** Worth attention was 16...fxg6!?, to create pressure on the f-file. **17.e4 f5 18.♘c4 f4 19.♘xd6 f3!?** It was also possible simply to take on d6 with the knight, retaining good chances. **20.♕e3** White decides to avoid the complications after 20.♘f5!? ♖xf5 21.♕e3 ♖f7 22.♕g5, although in this variation, he has the initiative. **20...cxd6 21.♕g5 ♕f7⇄** Azmaiparashvili-Gulko, Volgodonsk 1983.

B) **10.e4 e5 11.d5 ♘e7** Another typical position. Theoretically, White may have some advantage, but in practice it is easier to play Black, since he can attack the king. **12.b4** 12.♖e1 h6 13.h3 ♘g6 14.♗f1 ♕e7 15.♗e3 ♗d7 16.♖c1 ♖ac8 17.♘d2 b5!⇄ Cherepkov-Vaganian, Sochi 1969. **12...♘g6 13.♘e1 b5 14.♗b3 a5 15.bxa5 ♖xa5 16.♘d3 b4 17.♘a4 bxa3⇄** Brito Garcia-Miladinovic, Las Palmas 1994. These two examples also show that even on the queenside, Black is not obliged to concede the initiative wholly to his opponent;

C) **10.b4** e5 11.d5 ♘e7 12.♘d2 ♘g6 13.♘de4 (a solid, but not very aggressive continuation) 13...♘xe4 14.♘xe4 f5 15.♘xd6 cxd6 16.f4 b5! (White has secured himself against a kingside attack, and now Black in turn freezes the white queenside attack) 17.♗b3 ♕b6 18.♔h1 ♗b7⇄ Rashkovsky-Mitkov, Skopje 1991.

10...e5 11.h3 ♗d7



One of the ideas of this low-key move is to continue ...♕c8 and then either bring the bishop to f5, or sacrifice it on h3.

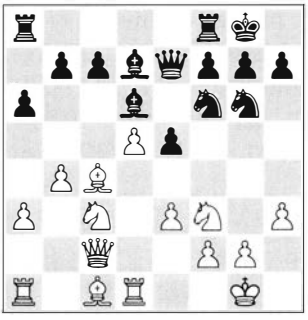
12.d5

A) In the following game, Black wrongly backed out of the sacrifice on h3: **12.♖d1** ♕c8 13.d5 ♘e7 14.e4

♘g6 15.♗e3 (Karpov-Vescovi, Guarulhos 2006) 15...♗xh3!? 16.gxh3 ♕xh3 17.♘h2 ♘g4 18.♘xg4 ♘h4! 19.f3 ♘xf3+ 20.♔f2 ♘d4, and Black has enough counterplay for a draw;

B) **12.♗a2** exd4 13.exd4 ♘e7 (stronger is 13...♕c8! 14.♗g5 ♗f5⇄) 14.♗g5! (the pin is very unpleasant for Black, which would not have been the case if Black had moved his queen to c8 on the previous move) 14...♗f5 15.♕b3 ♖b8 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♖fe1 ♗g6 18.♘e4± Ibragimov-Onischuk, New York 2006.

12...♘e7 13.♖d1 ♘g6 14.b4 ♕e7



A well-known motif: White keeps his pawn on e3, not allowing the enemy knight into f4, and in reply, Black prepares ...e5-e4 followed by ♕e5.

15.♘d2 ♘e8

A very 'King's Indian' theme – Black opens the path of his f-pawn.

16.♘ce4 a5!?

Otherwise White would play ♘b3 and constantly threaten a knight jump into a5 or c5. Black should not completely concede the initiative to his opponent on the queenside, as his counterattack on the other wing is still in its infancy.

17.♖b1 axb4 18.axb4?!

Black has more problems after 18.♘xd6 ♘xd6 19.♖xb4.

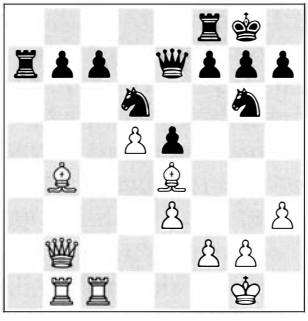
18...♗xb4 19.♕b2

Maybe White had originally intended to sacrifice a pawn with 19.d6!? ♗xd6 20.♖xb7, but then noticed that after 20...♗c8! 21.♖b1 ♗e6 Black neutralises his opponent's pressure.

19...♗xd2 20.♗xd2 ♗f5!

After 20...b6 21.d6! ♘xd6 22.♘xd6 cxd6 23.♗b4 White firmly seizes the initiative, whilst he will soon win back the sacrificed material.

21.♗d3 ♘d6 22.♗b4 ♗xe4 23.♗xe4 ♖a7 24.♖dc1



The activity of the white pieces compensates fully for the pawn minus.

24...f5 25.♗d3 e4 26.♗f1 f4 27.♕c2?!

He can hold the balance with 27.♕d4! ♖aa8 28.exf4 ♘xf4 29.♗xd6 cxd6 30.♖e1 ♕g5 31.g3 ♘d3 32.♗xd3 exd3 33.♕xd3.

27...fxe3 28.fxe3 ♖f7?!

Black misses his chance: after 28...b6! 29.♗xd6 cxd6 30.♖xb6 ♖a3 White

faces a difficult choice, either to go over to pure defence or sacrifice a pawn. The second option seems best: 31.♕b2 ♖xe3 32.♖b7 ♕e5 33.♕xe5 ♘xe5 34.♖cc7 with good drawing chances, thanks to the activity of his rooks.

29.♗c5! b6

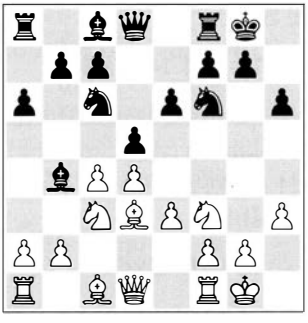
The extra pawn cannot be held, e.g. 29...♖a8 30.♗xd6 cxd6 31.♖b4 ♖e8 32.♗b5.

30.♗xd6 ♕xd6 31.♕xe4 ♘e5 32.♖a1 ♖xa1

Draw.

Game 38
Vaisser,Anatoly
Gulko,Boris
Sochi 1985

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0 a6 8.h3 h6



9.a3

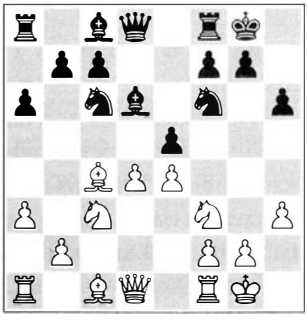
All of the other rook pawns have already made this one small step, so why leave the a2 pawn at home? But seriously, White does not have so many useful moves, which strengthen his position and do not change the structure. It is time to clarify the intentions of the enemy dark-squared bishop and prepare a possible space gain with the move b2-b4.

It seems to me that the move **9.♖e1** is less useful here. After 9...dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♗d6 11.e4 e5 12.♗e3 b5 13.♗b3 ♗b7 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15.♘d4 we reach a position already known to us, from the game Hort-Langeweg, Amsterdam 1982, where Black should take the pawn on e4, equalising.

9...dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♗d6 11.e4

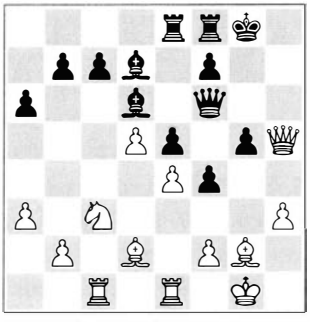
In reply to **11.♕c2** Black develops in the well-known way: e5, ♗d7, ♕c8 and then proceeds according to circumstances, e.g.: **11...e5 12.♖d1** 12.b4 ♗d7 13.♗b2 exd4 14.exd4 ♕c8 15.♘e4 ♘xe4 16.♕xe4 ♗f5 17.♕h4 ♕d8 18.♕h5 ♕f6 19.♖ae1 ♗g6 20.♕g4 ♗f5 21.♕h5, draw, Vera-Mitkov, Merida 2005. **12...♗d7 13.♗a2 ♕c8 14.♘d5 ♘xd5 15.♗xd5 exd4 16.exd4 ♗f5 17.♕c3 ♘e7** The queen turns out to be very useful on c8: it helps the bishop come to f5 and defends the b7 pawn in advance, thanks to which Black's last move becomes possible. **18.♗b3 c6 19.♘e5 ♗e6 20.♗c2 ♗f5** draw, Gonzalez Zamora-Mitkov, Morelia 2007.

11...e5



12.♗e3

White could close the centre here with **12.d5**. The following game, which strongly reminds one of the game Reshevsky-Rubinetti, which we have already seen, shows what resources Black has available: **12...♘e7 13.♖e1 ♘g6 14.♗f1 ♘h7 15.♗e3 ♗d7** 15...♘g5!? 16.♘xg5 hxg5 17.b4 ♘f4 18.♗c5 g6 19.♖c1 ♔g7 20.♘e2 ♖h8 21.♖c3 ♕f6 22.♗xd6 cxd6 23.♖c7 g4⇄ Konca-M.Arkhangelsky, corr. 1988. **16.♖c1 ♕f6 17.g3 ♖ae8 18.♗g2 ♘g5 19.♘xg5 hxg5 20.♕h5 ♘f4** A forced piece sacrifice, but quite unpleasant for White, all the same. **21.gxf4 gxf4 22.♗d2 g5**



Analysis diagram

Black has a pawn and the initiative for the piece. Now he threatens 23...♔g7 and 24...♖h8. White decides to exchange queens, but in doing so, he has to bury his light-squared bishop.

23.h4 g4 24.f3 g3 25.♘a2 ♔g7 26.♗b4 ♖h8 27.♕g5+ ♕xg5 28.hxg5 ♖h2 This position is most probably drawn. It is impossible to prevent Black playing ...♖eh8 and ...♗h3, whilst after the exchange of bishops on g2, the protected passed pawn on g3 becomes a real strength. **29.♗xd6 cxd6 30.♖c2 ♗h3 31.♖ec1 ♗xg2 32.♖xg2 ♖h3 33.♔f1 ♖eh8 34.♔e2?** The balance would be maintained by 34.♖cc2. **34...♖h2 35.♖g1 ♖xg2+ 36.♖xg2 ♖h2?** After 36...♖h1! 37.♘b4 ♔g6 38.♘d3 ♖b1 White would be lost; the threat of ...♔xg5-h4-h3 is very strong. **37.♔f1 ♖h1+ 38.♖g1 ♖h2 39.♖g2** draw, Ibragimov-Gipslis, Alushta 1993.

I would repeat: this type of position, which reminds one of the classical system of the King's Indian, needs further study. Black's attack, which concentrates all of his pieces in a small corner of the board, looks very threatening, but often he has to sacrifice a piece for rather abstract compensation.

12...♕e7

Nowadays, **12...b5** is considered strongest, probably correctly so. Then possible is: 13.♗a2 ♗b7 14.♖e1 (14.d5 ♘e7 15.♕d3 ♘g6 16.♘e2 ♘h5, draw, Averbakh-Knezevic, Polanica Zdroj 1976) 14...exd4 15.♗xd4 ♘xd4 16.♕xd4 c5 17.♕d2 ♖e8 18.♖ad1 ♗c7⇄ Lesiège-Mitkov, Istanbul 2000.

13.♖e1 exd4 14.♗xd4

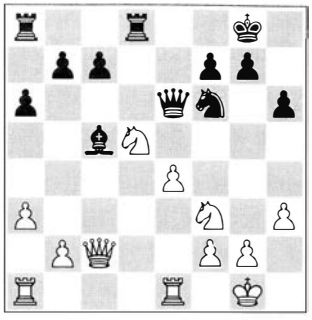
Little is promised to White after 14.♘xd4 on account of 14...♘xd4 15.♗xd4 c5 16.♗e3 b5 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.♗xd5 ♖b8⇄.

14...♘xd4 15.♕xd4

And here 15.♘xd4 ♗e5 16.♘f3 ♗xc3 17.bxc3 b5 18.♗b3 ♗b7 19.e5 ♘e4⇄ is not dangerous.

15...♗c5 16.♕d2 ♖d8 17.♕c2 ♗e6 18.♗xe6 ♕xe6 19.♘d5!?

A tempting raid, but it was probably better to play **19.♘e2 ♕b6 20.♘f4**, retaining a small amount of pressure.



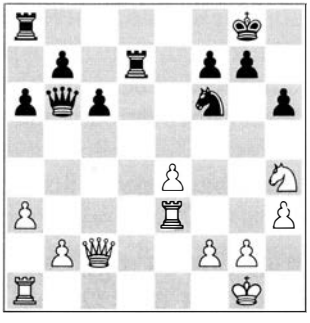
19...♗b6?!

Black avoids the complications, but wrongly: **19...♘xd5!** 20.♕xc5 ♘f4 21.♕xc7 ♘d3 22.♖e3 ♕b3!. Now it is not so easy for White to extinguish his opponent's activity. A possible continuation is 23.♘e5 (Black has a good game after 23.♕c3 ♕xc3 24.bxc3 ♖ac8 25.♖d1 ♖xc3 26.♔f1 ♖c1 27.♖ee1 ♖cc8=) 23...♕xb2 24.♕xf7+ ♔h7 25.♘xd3 ♕xa1+ 26.♔h2 ♕f6 27.♕xb7 ♖ab8⇄.

20.♘xb6 ♕xb6 21.♖e3 c6 22.♘h4

His opponent's passive play has allowed White to seize the initiative. He has an extra pawn in the centre and the threats on the kingside could cause Black a lot of trouble, especially considering that the queen on b6 is out of play.

22...♖d7



23.e5?!

In the variation 23.♘f5! ♖ad8 24.e5 ♖d2 Black obtains real counterplay, but even so, after 25.♕c4 White's threats appear more dangerous, e.g. 25...♖xf2!? (25...♘d5 26.♕g4 g6 27.♖f3±) 26.♔xf2 ♕xb2+ 27.♔g3 ♕xa1 28.exf6 ♕xf6 29.♕e4±.

23...♘d5 24.♖g3 ♘e7!

Black manages to protect the f5-square against the incursion of the enemy knight. The worst is behind him.

25.♖e1 ♕d4

And now the queen returns to the fray. White's initiative gradually dissipates.

26.♘f5 ♘xf5 27.♕xf5 ♖e8 28.♕f6 g6 29.b4?!

White continues to play for a win out of inertia, overrating his chances, and starts to fall into difficulties. It was probably time to force a draw: 29.♖g4! ♕xb2 30.♖xg6+! fxg6 31.♕xg6+ ♔f8 32.♖e3 ♖ee7 33.♕xh6+ ♔g8 34.♕g6+ ♖g7 35.♕e8+ ♔h7 36.♕h5+, and it all ends in perpetual check.



29...♖d6!

Thanks to this tactical resource, Black repulses all the threats on the kingside.

30.♕f5 ♔f8 31.♕e4

The queen exchange is forced, in order not to remain a pawn down.

31...♕xe4 32.♖xe4 ♖d5 33.♖ge3 ♔e7

Objectively stronger was 33...♖ed8 (with the idea of ...♖d3, exchanging a pair of rooks and trying to exploit the weakness of the pawns on e5 and a3), but after 34.e6 ♖e8 35.exf7 ♖xe4 36.♖xe4 ♔xf7 37.g3!? White should hold without particular problems.

34.g4?!

He should tie Black down to the f7 pawn: 34.♖f4! ♖ed8 35.♖ef3 ♖f8 36.♖e3, and it is not clear how Black can strengthen his position.

34...♖ed8 35.♔g2 ♖d2 36.♖f3 ♖8d3!

It is essential to exchange a pair of rooks, so as to deprive White of counterplay.

37.♖ee3 ♖xe3 38.♖xe3 ♔e6 39.♔g3 g5 40.f4 gxf4+ 41.♔xf4 ♖d4+ 42.♔g3

After 42.♖e4 ♖d3 White loses a pawn, but it cannot be said definitively that his position is lost: 43.h4 ♖xa3 44.♖d4 ♖a4 45.♔e4 ♔e7 46.h5 – White is still somehow hanging on by the skin of his teeth.

42...♖d5 43.♔f4 a5 44.bxa5 ♖xa5 45.h4 ♖a4+ 46.♔g3 b5 47.h5 c5 48.♖b3

White strives for a theoretically drawn ending, two pawns down.

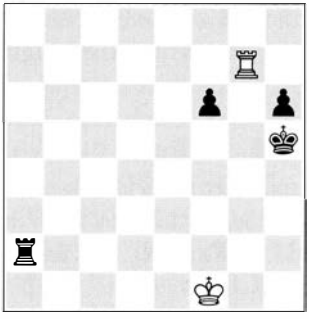
48...♔xe5 49.♖xb5 ♖xa3+ 50.♔f2 ♔f4

After 50...♔d4 51.♖b6 the h5-pawn ensures White sufficient counterplay.

51.♖xc5 ♖a2+ 52.♔f1 ♔xg4 53.♖c6 ♔g5 54.♖c7 f6 55.♖g7+

The position is theoretically drawn, although it is very hard to defend in a practical game, of course. Anatoly Vaisser copes with this very difficult task – admittedly, he slipped up once, but Boris Gulko 'forgave' him.

55...♔xh5

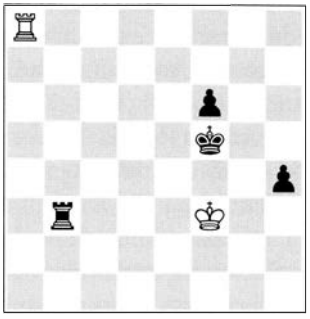


56.♖g8 ♖b2 57.♔g1 ♖c2 58.♔f1 ♖d2 59.♔g1 ♖e2 60.♔f1 ♖c2 61.♔g1 ♖d2 62.♔f1 ♖a2 63.♔g1 ♖b2 64.♔f1 ♖b5

Black needs to free his king from the edge of the board and then push his pawns. White does best to keep his rook on the top left corner, so as to be able to check from behind and from the side. The white king should, wherever possible, stay in front of whichever pawn is further advanced. These are the most general recommendations, and whilst the ending is very complicated, detailed examination is outside the scope of this book.

65.♖a8 ♔g5 66.♔g2 ♖b2+ 67.♔f3 ♖b3+ 68.♔f2 ♖b4

69.♔f3 h5 70.♖c8 h4 71.♖g8+ ♔f5 72.♖a8 ♖b3+



73.♔f2?

Correct was 73.♔g2, heading towards the pawn which is further advanced.

73...♔g5?

Gulko misses his chance. After 73...♖b2+! 74.♔f3 h3 the pawn reaches the second rank, and Black, according to the Nalimov tablebases, gives mate in 49 moves. For the rest of the game, White defends faultlessly.

74.♔g2 ♖g3+ 75.♔f2 ♔g4 76.♖g8+ ♔h3 77.♖f8 ♖g6 78.♔f3 ♔h2 79.♔f2 ♖g2+ 80.♔f1 ♖g6 81.♔f2 h3 82.♖f7 ♖g2+ 83.♔f1

Draw.

Game 39
Reshevsky,Samuel
Fischer,Robert
New York 1961

In January 1961, the 17-year old Robert Fischer won the US Championship for the fourth time, whilst Samuel Reshevsky, for decades the country's leading player, finished outside the prize list for the first time. What happened next is described by Garry Kasparov in Volume four of *My Great Predecessors*:

'Stunned by this fiasco, Reshevsky decided to show "who is boss", and announced to anyone who would listen, "Fischer has not shown me anything. He could never beat me in a match". Fischer accepted the challenge, and already in June, the American chess federation announced a match of 16 games... The prize fund was comparable to world championship matches of the day – 6000 dollars. This was not surprising – the initiator and main sponsor of the match, Jacqueline Piatigorsky, was a descendant of the Rothschild family.'

This highly interesting match saw a fierce struggle, but unfortunately, it was never finished. After the 11th game, the score was level (+2-2=7), but then Fischer, outraged by the organisers' decision to move the start of the next game to 11.00 am, refused to continue play and forfeited the match.

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.e3 0-0 6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.a3



'A significantly more committal move than 7.0-0. And, even more important, a clever pyschological challenge to Fischer: are you brave enough to play

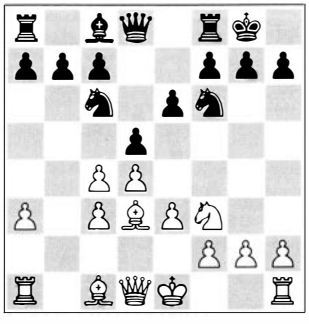
for a win, in a complicated, unstable position?' – Mednis.

7...♗xc3+

'Reshevsky's psychological idea works. Although Fischer had a one-point advantage in the match at this moment, he considered it a matter of honour to play for a win as Black. Strategically, the text is inaccurate: Black agrees to enter an unfavourable line of the Saemisch Nimzo-Indian. Correct was 7...dxc4! 8.♗xc4 (the "combination" 8.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 9.axb4 ♘xb4 gives White absolutely nothing) 8...♗d6' – Mednis.

In fact, this game made such an impression on players at the time that the variation with the exchange on c3 went completely out of use. Kasparov also considers that the standard exchanging operation **7...dxc4** and **8...♗d6** is 'clearly better' than the game continuation. However, he then shows a precise path to equality for Black, and says nothing about how White should fight for an advantage. Maybe White really does not have a clear advantage here?

8.bxc3



8...♘a5

Lipnitsky approves of this move: 'We have seen the analogous manoeuvre many times. Black forces the exchange on d5, which opens his light-squared bishop. In addition, from a5, the knight takes an active part in fighting against the weakened light squares on the queenside. After the exchange on c3, it would be weaker to go into the system with ...e6-e5, e.g. 8...♕e7 9.0-0 dxc4 10.♗xc4 e5 11.a4! ♖d8 12.♗a3 ♕e8 13.♘g5 ♖d7 14.♕c2± Dubinin-Ragozin, Leningrad 1934.'

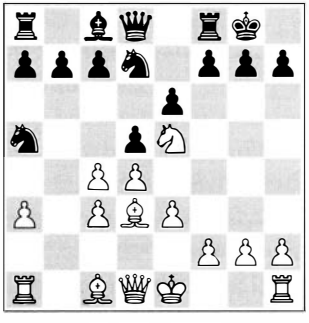
However, Mednis, although he does not criticise the move, considers it an unfortunate necessity: 'Black is forced into this clumsy manoeuvre, in order to get in ...c7-c5.'

I would support Lipnitsky: Black's play looks fully logical. Exploiting his slight lead in development, he tries to create play on the queenside at once.

9.♘d2!?

The idea of this move is not only to strengthen the point c4, but also to prevent the knight being pinned by ♗g4, after the exchange on d5.

The seemingly more active means of doing the same thing by **9.♘e5** is weaker because of **9...♘d7**

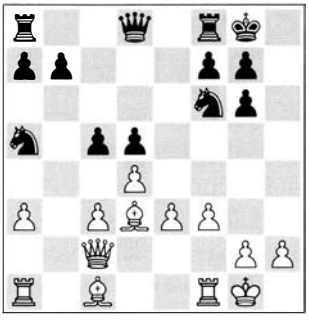


Analysis diagram

Black is cramped and any exchange eases his position. 10.♘xd7 ♗xd7 11.cxd5 exd5 12.0-0 ♕h4 13.♕f3 ♗e6 – thanks to his bishop pair, White

is slightly better, but no more, Rogers-Ivanovic, Bor 1986.

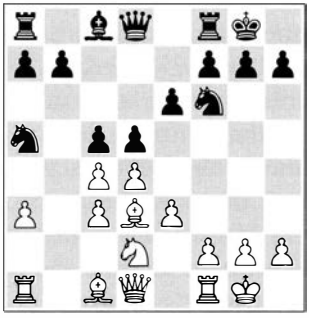
The exchange of pawns allows Black to activate his bishop: **9.cxd5 exd5 10.0-0 ♗g4** 'An important element in Black's strategic plan. The bishop comes round via h5 to g6, to exchange the bishop on d3, after which the weakness of the light squares in White's camp becomes more noticeable' – Lipnitsky. **11.♕c2 c5** Also good is 11...♗xf3!? 12.gxf3 ♕d7. **12.♘e5** White gets nothing from 12.dxc5 because of 12...♗xf3 13.gxf3 ♕c8! 14.a4 ♖e8⇄. **12...♗h5 13.f3** As usual, White wants to play e3-e4 and shift the focus of the battle to the kingside. **13...♗g6 14.♘xg6 hxg6**



'White has preserved his light-squared bishop, at the cost of strengthening the black kingside. Consequently, it is now hard for him to organise an attack on the black king, which is protected by the pawn barrier f7, g7, g6. Meanwhile, Black can continue his action in the centre and on the queenside, exploiting the great activity of his two knights' – Lipnitsky.

15.♕f2 The battle now revolves around the advance e3-e4. Black has sufficient resources to hinder it seriously. **15...♘b3 16.♖b1 ♘xc1 17.♖fxc1 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♖c8** with a good game for Black, Geller-Lipnitsky, Ukraine 1948.

9...c5 10.0-0



10...b6

Kasparov criticises this move: 'A second opening mistake, made all the more difficult to understand by the fact that, a year earlier, in the game Thorbergsson-Fischer, Reykjavik 1960, Black had already shown the correct path: 10...dxc4 11.♘xc4 ♘xc4 12.♗xc4 ♕c7 13.♕e2 e5 14.♗b2 e4 (even better is 14...♖e8! 15.h3 ♗e6) 15.h3 ♗f5 16.♖fd1 ♖ac8 17.a4 cxd4 18.♖xd4 ♖fd8=.'

I think that even after the move in the game, however, Black still has sufficient resources to maintain the balance.

11.cxd5 exd5

'At the time of this game, it was already 20 years since Botvinnik had shown that positions of this type are very nice for White. It seems as though the black pawns stand well in the centre, but they have no prospects, because they are practically fixed on their squares. White, on the other hand, after suitable preparation, can advance e3-e4 and having obtained the superiority in the centre and opened lines for his bishops, has excellent chances of winning. Reshevsky executes this plan perfectly. However Black already has nothing

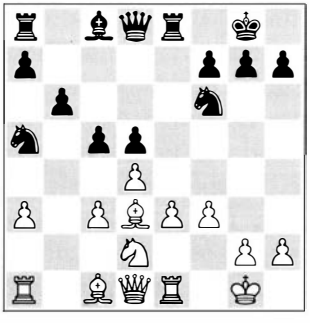
better than 11...exd5, since with his knight out of play on a5, the 11...♘xd5 completely cedes White control over the centre. Black made his strategical mistake on move 7' – Mednis.

An interesting note, but it takes no account of the dynamic features of the position. If White had the right to make 3-4 moves in a row, then he would do exactly as Mednis says. But the players move alternately, and for the moment Black outstrips his opponent in development, as one can easily see; he just needs to find a rational plan to strengthen his position. And besides, it is hard to believe that the standard Ragozin and Nimzo-Indian plan, of exchanging bishop for knight on c3, is a strategic mistake.

12.f3

White is noticeably behind in development, so it is not surprising that the immediate break in the centre leads to difficulties: **12.dxc5** bxc5 13.e4?! c4 14.♗c2 ♗g4 15.f3 ♗h5 16.exd5 ♘xd5 17.♘e4 ♗g6 18.♔h1 ♖b8∓ Peev-Pipkov, Sofia 1971.

12...♖e8 13.♖e1

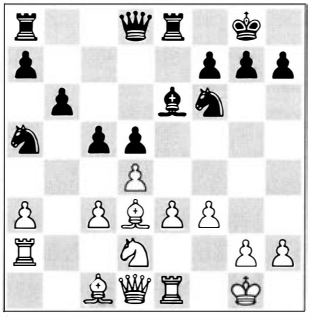


A stern battle is going on around the advance e3-e4.

13...♗e6

This may not be the best place for the bishop. It obstructs the rook on e8 and when White gets in his central pawn advance (as he will inevitably do, sooner or later), the bishop may come under attack. However, as we will see, Reshevsky does not manage to cast doubts on this move. At the same time, Black has a couple of other alternatives. Mednis' recommendation **13...♗b7** appears not to have been tested to this day; the variation has a bad reputation for Black, and nobody wants to play it. In my opinion, this verdict is too harsh. I would suggest another possibility: **13...♗d7!?** with the idea of playing ...b6-b5 and securing the knight a square on c4, whilst the queen has a line opened to b6. A possible continuation then is **14.e4** 14.♖b1 is too slow, since after 14...♖c8 Black is already ready to exchange on d4 and start active operations along the c-file; nor is 14.dxc5 dangerous, both because of 14...bxc5, and also the more cunning reply 14...♕c7!?. **14...b5 15.♖b1** On 15.e5 there is 15...cxd4! 16.exf6 ♕xf6 or 16.cxd4 ♕b6 17.♗b2 ♘c4, in both cases with great complications. **15...cxd4 16.cxd4 dxe4 17.fxe4 ♗g4 18.♘f3 ♘c4** Black is excellently prepared for the battle, which is beginning to erupt over the whole board.

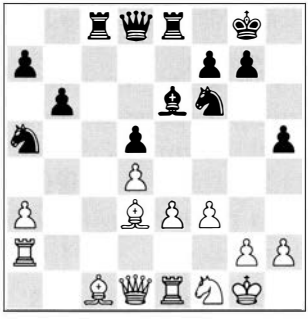
14.♖a2



14...♖c8

There is also Kasparov's interesting idea **14...♕d7!?**, in order to meet **15.g4?!** with the shocking **15...cxd4 16.cxd4 ♘e4!**, radically sharpening the situation, and taking over the initiative. Of course, White is not obliged to play 15.g4, and 15.a4 is more cautious, but in this case, Black plays 15...♖ac8 and prepares ♘c4. The position remains double-edged.

15.♘f1 cxd4 16.cxd4 h5?!



'This is far from being an attacking move, as some commentators have claimed, but is a defensive move, aimed against White's planned kingside attack with g2-g4. But Black cannot afford such a weakening of his kingside. Black's position was already unsatisfactory, but the time had not yet come for this suicide. Something like 16...♕d7 was a perfectly logical continuation' – Mednis.

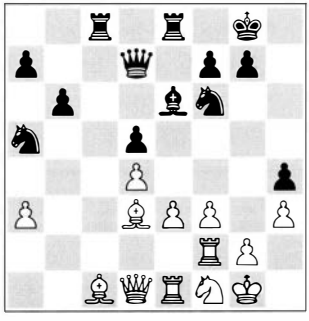
But here is what Kasparov says: 'With the directness of a Roman, Fischer prevents the move g2-g4 and the activation of the knight via g3. Mednis gives this move a question mark and calls it the decisive mistake. Undoubtedly, such a weakening cannot be good, but this assessment is too strict and is clearly influenced by the result of the game.'

Kasparov also considers **16...♕d7** the best continuation, intending 17.g4 ♘e4!?, and gives quite a detailed analysis, showing that Black has adequate play. I would dare to suggest that Fischer was perfectly happy with his position and was not thinking of defence, but of cramping his opponent's position, but he overlooked a strong tactical resource for Reshevsky. Rybka 4 is also very optimistic about Black's position, although instead of the move of the h-pawn, it suggests immediately beginning operations on the queenside: **16...♘c4!** White cannot play e3-e4 at the moment, and after 17.g4 there is the unpleasant reply 17...h5! 18.g5 ♘h7 19.f4 ♗g4∓.

17.h3 h4

Here and on the next move it was also necessary to bring the knight to c4, limiting the scope of the opponent's pieces.

18.♖f2 ♕d7



19.e4!!

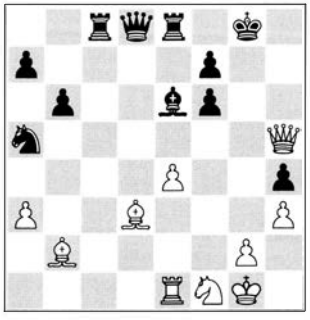
Reshevsky does not miss his chance to uncoil the spring of his position, with the aid of a tactic. It is likely that Fischer was thrown into turmoil by this strong move.

19...dxe4 20.fxe4 ♗b3?!

Suddenly, Black has great difficulties: White threatens not only to push his central pawns, but also to bring his bishop to g5 and win the 'presumptuous' pawn on h4. Fischer's move does little to hinder White's plans.

Probably Black's best practical chance was to take the 'poisoned pawn' with **20...♕xd4**. Now the tempting 21.e5? (as suggested by Mednis) gives nothing, because of 21...♖xc1! (not 21...♘d7? 22.♗h7+ or 21...♖ed8? 22.exf6 ♕xd3 23.♖d2) 22.♕xc1 (after 22.♗h7+? ♘xh7 23.♕xd4 ♖xe1 Black has too much material for the queen – rook, bishop knight and pawn) 22...♘g4 23.hxg4 ♕xd3⇄. Black has a pawn for the exchange and all of his pieces are active, whilst White has a weak king and split pawns.

Even so, Kasparov found a winning line, the main variations being: **21.♗b2! ♕d8** Retreating the queen to c5 also has its drawbacks: 21...♕c5 22.e5 ♘d7 23.♕h5 ♘f8 24.♘d2→. **22.♖xf6!** Without this exchange sacrifice, it is hard for White to develop his attack. **22...gxf6 23.♕h5**



Analysis diagram

The longer the computer thinks about this position, the less it rates Black's chances. It may be that there is already no defence, e.g. **23...♖c5** 23...♗c4 24.♘e3 ♖c5 25.♕xh4 ♖e6 26.♗c2+–; 23...♘c4 24.♗xc4 ♗xc4 25.♕g4+ ♔f8 26.♕xh4 ♖e5 27.♗xe5 fxe5 28.♕h8+ ♔e7 29.♕xe5+±; 23...♘c6 24.♗b5 ♘e5 25.♖d1 ♕e7 26.♗xe8 ♖xe8 27.♕xh4±. **24.♕h6 ♖e5 25.♗b5 ♖f8 26.♖e3** threatening 27.♘g3!.

'Nonetheless, 20...♕xd4 (taking a central pawn!) made definite practical sense: there was too much chance of the move 21.e5, allowing Black to simplify the game. Even the attack involving the exchange sacrifice on f6, was far from obvious and demands from White a great deal of decisiveness' – Kasparov.

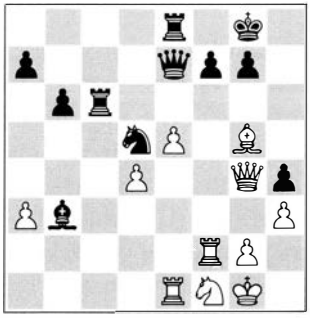
21.♕d2 ♗c4

Now already, it is not so good to take the central pawn: 21...♕xd4 22.e5 ♖xc1 23.♖xc1 ♕xe5 24.♕f4±. Black loses the h4 pawn, after which he faces a difficult defence.

22.♗c2 ♘b3 23.♗xb3 ♗xb3 24.e5 ♘d5 25.♕g5 ♕e7

The pawn cannot be saved anyway, so it made sense for Black to exchange a pair of rooks, reducing the pressure on the f-file and slightly weakening the opponent's king. 25...♖c2 26.♖xc2 ♗xc2 27.♕xh4 ♖c8, and Black obtains definite compensation.

26.♕g4 ♖c6 27.♗g5



27...♕xa3??

'A mistake explained by carelessness and being repulsed by his own position. It was essential to play 27...♕e6, although after 28.♕xh4 there can be no doubt about the outcome of the game' – Mednis.

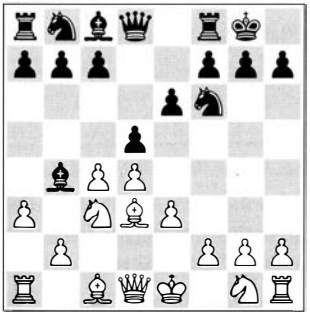
Again, too categorical an assessment. After 28...♗c2 29.♘g3 ♖ec8 Black sets up a blockade on the light squares; obviously, Reshevsky would still have a good deal of work to do, to realise his advantage.

28.♕d7

A triple attack on both rooks and the f7 pawn. Black resigned.

Game 40
Botvinnik,Mikhail
Tal,Mikhail
Moscow 1961 (m/1)

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.d4 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.a3



6...dxc4

Statistically, the most popular continuation here is **6...♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 dxc4 8.♗xc4 c5** or immediately **7...c5**, but in this case, we remain within the confines of the Nimzo-Indian. The same may be said of the retreat **6...♗e7**.

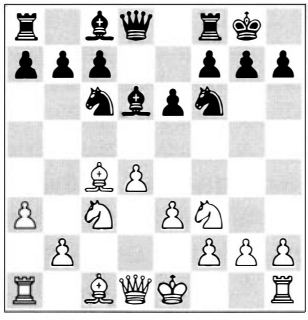
7.♗xc4

7.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 8.axb4 ♘c6 is harmless, e.g. **9.♘f3** 9.b5 ♘b4 10.♖a4 a5 11.♘f3 ♗d7 12.e4 ♘d3+ 13.♔f1 ♘xc1 14.♕xc1 c6⇄ Iztok-I.Farago, Sas van Gent 1992. **9...♘xb4 10.0-0 c5 11.♘e5 ♔g8 12.dxc5 ♘d7 13.♘xd7 ♗xd7 14.♕g4 b5 15.cxb6 ♕xb6 16.e4 ♘d3 17.♗h6 ♕d4 18.♗e3 ♕d6** draw, Petursson-Tal, Reykjavik 1988.

7...♗d6 8.♘f3

As Botvinnik explained, White gets nothing from **8.f4** because of **8...c5!**. '9...cxd4 is threatened, and Black is better mobilised. Therefore, White should exchange queens.' **9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.b4** 'A tempting, but risky move. The undefended bishop on c4 and knight on c3 can be exploited subtly by Black. Correct was 10.♘f3.' **10...♗b6 11.♕xd8** 'This is the idea of the whole variation. Theoretically White should be able to count on the better ending, as his king is better placed than that of the opponent, but for now, Black has the initiative.' **11...♖xd8 12.♘f3 ♗d7 13.♗d2 ♖c8 14.♘e5** (Botvinnik-Balashov, Hastings 1966/67) After 14.♗d3 ♗xe3! 15.♗xe3 ♖xc3 White loses a pawn. **14...♗e8 15.♔e2 ♘c6 16.♘xc6 ♗xc6 17.♖hg1 ♖c7 18.♖ac1 ♖d8±**

8...♘c6

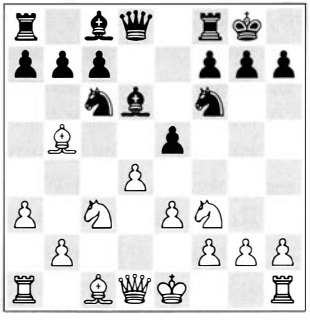


In the games examined earlier, we have seen a very similar position, but with White having castled instead of a2-a3. Botvinnik at first believed that this difference favoured White, because with the move 9.b4 (see the next game) he seizes the initiative. However, he later changed his opinion.

9.♘b5

We have seen a similar raid before and have convinced ourselves that it does not cause Black any great problems. For example, he can simply retreat the bishop to e7, then kick the knight with ...a7-a6 and return the bishop to its place, preparing ...e6-e5.

We should add also that with the white king in the centre, the move **9.♗b5** is not at all dangerous for Black, e.g. **9...e5**



Analysis diagram

10.♗xc6 Of course, it is possible to close the centre with 10.d5, but then it is not clear what the bishop is doing on b5. There could follow: 10...♘e7 11.e4 ♘g6 12.0-0 h6 13.♗d3 a6 14.♘e2 ♘h5 15.♗e3 ♗g4 16.♘e1 ♘hf4⇄ Obodchuk-Razuvaev, Pardubice 1993. **10...exd4 11.exd4** 11.♘xd4 bxc6 12.♘xc6 ♕e8 13.♘d4 ♖b8 14.f3 (Karasev-Mukhin, Leningrad 1978) 14...c5 15.♘db5 ♗e5 16.♘d6 ♗xc3+ 17.bxc3 ♕e5 18.♘xc8 ♖fxc8 19.♕c2 c4±. **11...bxc6 12.0-0** ♘**d5 13.♖e1** ♘**xc3 14.bxc3** (Christiansen-Tal, Moscow 1982) **14...♗e6 15.♘e5** ♕**h4⇄**.

9...e5

Tal chooses the most active continuation, and the exchange of knight for bishop does not bother him here at all. Also perfectly possible is **9...♗e7 10.0-0** After 10.♘c3 ♗d6 11.♘b5 we could have a repetition of moves. **10...a6 11.♘c3 ♗d6** In this typical position, White has a wide choice of possibilities: 12.e4, 12.h3, 12.♕c2, 12.b4. We have seen all of these in this chapter.

10.♘xd6

Botvinnik considers **10.dxe5** the most logical continuation, and after 10...♘xe5 11.♘xd6 White can probably count on a small advantage: 11...♘xf3+ 12.gxf3 cxd6 13.♕d4 ♗f5 (13...♗e6!?) 14.♗d2 ♕d7 15.♗c3 ♗g6 16.♖g1 ♕f5 17.♖g3± Szabo-Sosonko, Amsterdam 1975.

However, **10...♗xe5!?** is stronger, not allowing the opponent to create a weakness on d6. Play may then continue: **11.♕xd8** ♖**xd8 12.♗e2** 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♗e2 c6 14.♘c3 (14.♘d4?! c5 15.♘b5 ♗e6 16.♘c7 ♖ac8 17.♘xe6 fxe6 18.0-0 c4±) 14...♗e6 15.e4 ♘d3+ 16.♗xd3 ♖xd3⇄. **12...♗d7 13.♘xe5** ♘**xe5 14.♘xc7** ♖**ac8 15.♘b5** ♗**xb5 16.♗xb5** ♘**e4 17.0-0 a6 18.♗a4 b5 19.♗b3 g6!?** and the initiative passes to Black.

10...♕xd6

Worthy of consideration is **10...cxd6** 11.dxe5 dxe5 (11...♘xe5 12.♗e2±) 12.♕xd8 ♖xd8 13.♘g5 ♖d7 14.b4 h6 15.♘f3 e4 16.♘d2 ♘e5⇄.

11.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 12.♔xd1 ♘g4



13.♔e2

Two years later, Vladimir Liberzon tried to strengthen White's play, but after **13.♔e1** ♘gxe5 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♗e2 ♗f5 16.♗d2 ♘d3+ 17.♗xd3 ♗xd3 18.♖c1 ♖ac8 19.f3 c5 20.♔f2 f5 Liberzon-Tal, Moscow 1963, a roughly equal position arose. Later, Tal took too many risks, trying to win, and he lost.

13...♘cxe5 14.♗d5

With the idea of preventing Black from bringing his bishop to the long diagonal.

14...c6 15.♗e4 ♗e6

Obviously, Tal did not wish to weaken his pawn structure, but it was stronger to play **15...b6**, in order to bother the enemy king from the a6 square. Then possible is 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5 17.f3 (it is not clear how else to get the king away from the centre) 17...♗a6+ 18.♔f2 ♖ad8 and Black has a small initiative.



16.♘d2!

'White is behind in development, and despite the possession of two bishops, his position is clearly worse. Of course, it was possible just to fight for a draw with 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5 17.f4 ♗c4+ 18.♔f2 ♘d3+ 19.♗xd3 ♗xd3 20.♗d2, but in this variation, White is completely without counterplay. Naturally, he chooses a more complicated continuation' – is Botvinnik's comment.

So, Mikhail Moiseevich assesses his position rather pessimistically. One can imagine that Mikhail Nekhemievich, on the other hand, was very pleased with the way things were going. But the fearless Rybka believes that things are about level after White's last, strong move; apparently, Black's dynamic plusses are balanced by White's strategic gains.

16...♖ad8

'White does after all have a pawn majority in the centre, and in order to make it harder for it to advance, it was necessary to play 16...f5. Then in the right circumstances, there could be a threat of ...f5-f4, which would be very unpleasant for White on account of the bad position of his king in the centre. Now, however, White exploits the breathing space offered to him, to complete his development. And in the approaching endgame, his centralised king will become a significant factor in his favour' – Botvinnik.

In my opinion, the natural text-move does not deserve criticism. Tal's mistake came a little later.

17.h3 ♘f6 18.♗c2



18...♖d7?!

Black begins to play too directly. Significantly stronger was 18...b6!, in order to bring the bishop to a6 quickly. In this case, in order to maintain the balance, White would have to show definite accuracy:
19.b4!? ♗c8 20.♖d1 ♗a6+ 21.♔e1 ♗d3 22.♗b1! (weaker is 22.♗b3 ♗g6∓.

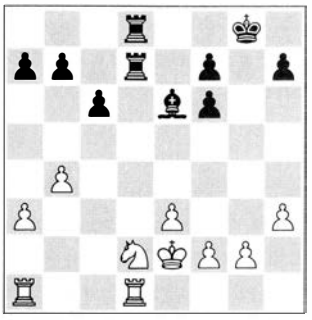
19.b3 ♖fd8 20.♖d1

'It only remains to play ♗c1-b2, after which Black will be in a difficult position. Therefore Tal has to exchange the bishop on c2' – Botvinnik.

20...♘d3 21.♗xd3 ♖xd3 22.♗b2 ♖3d7

'Of course, not 22...♗xb3, which leads to the loss of a piece. But the text move also testifies to the fact that Black underestimates the dangers of his position. It was essential to play 22...c5, activating the pawns on the queenside and fixing the weakness of the b3 pawn' – Botvinnik.
Even so, the pressure he exerts on the d-file allows Black to maintain the balance.

23.♗xf6 gxf6 24.b4



'How the position has changed in a couple of moves! Black has bad pawns, and the ending, both with and without rooks, will be difficult for him. Now perhaps the best choice was to restrict the knight's scope by 24...♗d5' – Botvinnik.

24...♗f5?

Botvinnik was absolutely right about the best move in this position: Black had to play 24...♗d5!, not allowing White to activate his knight and untangle his pieces. If Black manages to exchange bishop for knight, then he will feel safe in both the rook and the pawn ending. A possible continuation is 25.g4 (25.f3 f5 26.♖ac1 ♔g7⇄) 25...♗g2! 26.♖a2 ♗d5 27.♖aa1 ♗g2, and the game ends in a draw by repetition.

25.♘b3 ♗d3+

'A temporary and relatively insignificant achievement. It is obvious that the bishop will soon have to retreat' – Botvinnik.

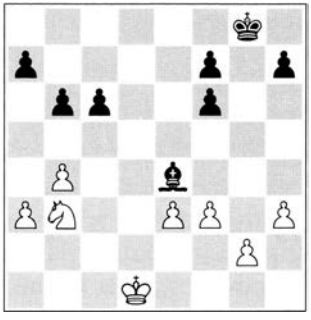
26.♔e1 b6?!

Black wrongly weakens his pawn structure further. More tenacious was 26...♗c4 27.♖xd7 ♖xd7 28.♘d4 ♔g7.

27.♖ac1 ♗e4 28.f3

White forces transition into a minor piece ending. Maybe he should have retained one pair of rooks, however.

28...♖xd1+ 29.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 30.♔xd1



30...♗d5?

'The last chance was 30...♗f5, so as to defend the c6 pawn from d7. Now the white knight gets into Black's position and starts "cleaning up"' – Botvinnik.

31.♘d4 c5 32.bxc5 bxc5 33.♘b5 a6 34.♘c7 ♗c4 35.♘e8 f5 36.h4 ♔f8 37.♘d6 ♗f1 38.g3

White plays the ending very accurately and energetically.

'All of the black pawns are isolated and the bishop cannot defend them. Before starting to pick off the ripe fruit, White puts his own pawns on dark squares' – Botvinnik.

38...♔e7

He also loses after 38...♗h3 39.♔e2 ♔e7 40.♘b7 c4 41.♘a5 c3 42.♔d3.

39.♘xf5+ ♔e6 40.e4 ♔e5 41.♔d2

Black resigned.

Game 41

Botvinnik,Mikhail

Tal,Mikhail

Moscow 1961 (m/3)

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.d4 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5

Annotating the 5th game of the match, in which the same opening moves were played, Viacheslav Ragozin wrote: 'Only now is the identity of the opening clear. After the first move one could say "English Opening", and after the third, "Nimzo-Indian Defence". But now we see that it's a Queen's Gambit with the bishop on b4, which is known to theory as the Ragozin Defence. I have to defend my child, since many writers, even specialist bulletins, for some reason call it a Nimzo-Indian, although the content of this opening has nothing much in common with that opening. After the 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.♘c3 it would never enter most people's head to call this a Spanish. The outward move-order does not always characterise the reality of the opening.'

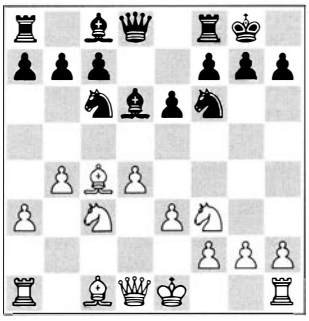
6.a3 dxc4 7.♗xc4 ♗d6

'It is not an accident that Tal used this line against me. Black concedes the centre, hoping to achieve lively piece play' – Botvinnik.

8.♘f3 ♘c6 9.b4

'The simplest method of developing the queen's bishop. White gets no advantage either from 9.♘b5 (as I played earlier in the match) or 9.♗b5. The age of the latter move is shown by the fact that it was seen as far back as the game Capablanca-Ragozin, Moscow 1936, with the sole difference that the white queen was already on b3, with his

bishop having taken on c4 in one move' – Botvinnik.



9...e5 10.♗b2

As usual, White can close the centre: **10.d5** ♘e7 11.♗b2 a6 12.h3 b5 13.♗b3 ♗b7 14.0-0 e4!? (Black hopes to take the initiative; I do not think that after 14...c6 15.dxc6 ♗xc6 he would have any trouble equalising) 15.♘g5 ♗e5 16.♕c2 ♘exd5 17.♘gxe4 ♘xe4 18.♕xe4 ♗xc3 19.♗xc3 ♘xc3 20.♕xb7 ♕d6 21.♕f3 (Black has achieved what he wanted, by reaching a double-edged position, but now he rushes things and overlooks a simple blow) 21...a5? 22.♗xf7+! ♔h8 23.e4 axb4 24.axb4 ♖xa1 25.♖xa1 ♕xb4 26.e5 ♕e7 27.e6± Gulko-Zubarev, Cappelle la Grande 2008.

10...♗g4

From the point of view of equalising, the simplest course is to exchange in the centre: **10...exd4 11.♘xd4 ♘e5** After the match, Botvinnik came to the view, and noted in his diary, that 11...♘xd4 12.♕xd4 c6! leads to equality. This seems to be so; after, for example, 13.♖d1 ♗c7 14.♕xd8 ♖xd8 15.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 16.♔e2 ♗e7, White does not even have a symbolic advantage. **12.♗e2 c6 13.♕c2 ♖e8** Rybka recommends 13...g6 followed by ...a7-a5, but the human player is reluctant to weaken the long diagonal, with the enemy bishop on b2. **14.♘f5 ♗xf5 15.♕xf5 ♕e7?!** Stronger is 15...b5! 16.0-0 a5⇄. **16.0-0 ♘g6 17.g3±** Pinchuk-Grigorian, Tashkent 1969.



11.d5

In his later white games in the match, Botvinnik decided to open the long diagonal: **11.dxe5 ♘xe5** A sharp, unbalanced position arises after 11...♗xe5 12.♗e2 ♕e7 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.♘d5 ♘xd5 15.♕xd5 ♗xe2 16.♔xe2 ♘g6⇄ Enklaar-I.Farago, Amsterdam 1985. White has an excellent bishop, but a weak king; I think chances are about equal. **12.♗e2 ♕e7** 'It favours Black to maintain the piece tension in the centre, because of his superior development. White has still not determined the position of his king, so Botvinnik heads down the road of simplification' – Ragozin. **13.♘b5 ♖fd8 14.♕c2 a6 15.♘xd6 cxd6**



Analysis diagram

'Although Black has an isolated pawn, it is not a weakness, since it supports Black's pieces in the centre. In addition, the open c-file promises Black the initiative' – Ragozin. **16.♕d1 ♖ac8 17.0-0 ♘e4 18.♘d4 ♗xe2 19.♕xe2 ♘c4⇄** Botvinnik-Tal, Moscow 1961 (m/5). 'Black's knights are excellently placed, and the dangerous white bishop on b2 is neutralised for the moment' – Ragozin.

11...♘e7 12.h3

In reply to **12.♕c2** it is not good to play 12...c6, because thanks to the opening of the a2-g8 diagonal, White can quickly attack the square f7: 13.dxc6 ♖c8 14.♘g5 ♖xc6 15.♕b3 ♗h5 16.0-0± Christiansen-Garcia Gonzales, Moscow 1982. Better is **12...♗xf3**, after which the white king is stuck in the centre: **13.gxf3 a5 14.b5 ♘c8⇄**.

12...♗d7

'More complicated play arises after 12...♗h5, but since Tal realised that I was prepared for this variation, he chooses a less obvious move. In addition, Black wishes to transfer the knight to g6, and in this case, the position of the bishop on h5 would be bad because of the reply g2-g4' – Botvinnik.

After the return match in 1961, this whole variation practically went out of use, and in the 50 years since then, the position after **12...♗h5** has only been seen a handful of times: 13.g4 ♗g6 14.♘h4 ♘d7 15.♘xg6 ♘xg6 16.♘e4 ♕h4 17.♕d3 f5 18.gxf5 ♖xf5 19.0-0-0 ♖f3⇄ Bjork-Angqvist, Stockholm 1987/88.

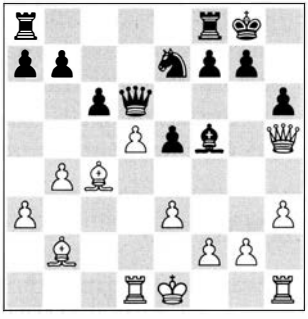
13.♘g5

'Temporarily taking control of the e4-square and setting the opponent a veiled trap. Tal, however, was so convinced of the naivety of his opponent that he falls for the trick' – Botvinnik writes.

13...♘g6?

'While the knight was on e7, it was perfectly possible to play the prophylactic 13...h6. Now, however, White carries out a tactical operation, exchanging the enemy light-squared bishop and obtaining a significant positional advantage' – Botvinnik.

The Patriarch's recommendation was tested in a correspondence game: **13...h6** 14.♘ge4 ♘xe4 15.♘xe4 ♗f5 16.♘xd6 ♕xd6 17.♕h5 c6 18.♖d1 (Kotka-Salonen, corr. 1970)...



Analysis diagram

and here Black has at his disposal the very interesting piece sacrifice 18...a5 19.g4 axb4!? 20.gxf5 bxa3 21.♗c3 a2⇄.

Another idea also deserves consideration: **13...a5!?** 14.b5 ♗f5 15.e4 ♗g6 16.♕e2 ♘c8 (Black has transferred his bishop to g6, to reinforce the kingside, and now he directs the knight to b6, and sets up a defence over the whole board) 17.♘f3 ♘b6 18.♗b3 ♖e8 19.0-0 a4 20.♗c2 h6⇄.



14.♘e6!

Botvinnik liked to complain publicly of his poor tactical vision, but as we see, he does not miss the chance to land a surprise blow.

14...fxe6 15.dxe6 ♔h8 16.exd7 ♕xd7 17.0-0

Black's basic problem is the weakness of his light squares in the centre and on the kingside. In addition, one should not forget that the opponent has the pair of bishops, and both are pointing at the kingside. The isolated pawn on e5 also needs constant attention.

17...♕f5 18.♘d5

Botvinnik wants to exchange the knight which defends the central light squares, but even stronger was 18.♕b1!.

18...♘g8?!

It is hard to believe that such a passive move can be good. Worthy of consideration was 18...♖ad8 19.♘xf6 gxf6, slightly strengthening his position in the centre.

19.♕g4!

Objectively, it is easiest for White to realise his positional advantage in the ending. In addition, Botvinnik was significantly stronger than his young opponent in this phase of the game.

19...♕c2 20.♕e2 ♕f5 21.♕g4 ♕c2 22.♕e2 ♕f5 23.e4

Having repeated moves to gain time, White continues his assault.

'An important move, further constricting the opponent's pieces. The square f4 is easily defended, whilst if Black wishes to transfer his knight to the newly-weakened d4-square, then an exchange on this square can only increase White's positional advantage' – Botvinnik.

23...♕d7 24.♖ad1 ♖ad8 25.♕g4 ♕e8 26.g3



26...♘h6?!

This knight has a tough life – first it returned to g8, and now it heads to h6... Meanwhile, Black had the chance to activate his pieces a little by 26...a5! 27.b5 ♘f6 28.♕e2 ♘d7 – the knight heads to c5, from where it may then go via e6 to d4.

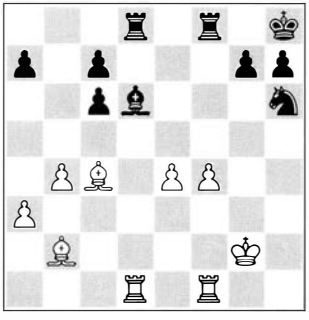
27.♕h5 ♘g8 28.♕e2 ♘6e7 29.♘e3 ♘h6 30.♘g4!

Botvinnik is not against the exchange of knights, but wants it to happen on his own terms, on the square g4. In this

case, the h-file will be opened, and the black king will then be likely to come under a direct attack.

30...♘xg4

Botvinnik regards this move as suicidal and suggests instead **30...♕h5**. However, in this case, a very strong retort is **31.f4!** ♘c6. A piece is lost after 31...♕xh3 32.♘xh6 gxh6 33.fxe5 ♖xf1+ 34.♖xf1 ♕xg3+ 35.♕g2 ♕xg2+ 36.♔xg2 ♗xb4 37.axb4 ♖d2+ 38.♖f2+−. **32.♘xe5 ♕xh3** 32...♕xe2 33.♗xe2 ♗xe5 34.♖xd8 ♖xd8 35.fxe5+− is absolutely prospectless. **33.♘xc6 ♕xg3+ 34.♕g2 ♕xg2+ 35.♔xg2 bxc6**



Analysis diagram

It may seem that the worst is behind Black – he has managed to reach an endgame, and has even grabbed an extra pawn on the way. However, the two bishops, pointing directly at his king, are a fearsome force. White continues the assault with the paradoxical move **36.♔h3!**, the idea of which is to open the g-file for his rooks. It is not apparent how Black can defend, e.g. 36...♖fe8 37.♖g1 ♗f8 38.♖xd8 ♖xd8 39.f5 ♖d2 40.♗e5 ♖c2 41.♗e6 ♘g8 42.♖d1+−.

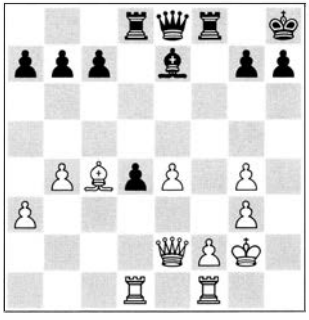
31.hxg4 ♘c6 32.♔g2 ♗e7 33.♗d5

White wants to preserve both rooks for the attack. Also good is 33.♖xd8 ♕xd8 34.f4 ♗d6 35.♕e3 ♕e7 36.♗d5 with strong pressure on Black's position.

33...♘d4

'Tal could not resist this "activity", but the resulting opposite-coloured bishops favour White, since Black has nothing with which to oppose the activity of the light-squared bishop' – Botvinnik.

34.♗xd4 exd4 35.♗c4



Botvinnik's plan is very simple: to put the bishop on d3, the rook on h1 and place the central pawns on e5 and f4. It was also possible just to grab the b7 pawn, of course.

35...c5 36.b5

Botvinnik's iron hand carries out his plan and he is not at all bothered by the fact that his opponent now obtains connected passed pawns.

36...♗f6?!

Tal is ready to part with the d-pawn, in order to exchange a pair of rooks and bring his bishop to d4. But the fact is that once White plays f4 and e5, the bishop on d4 will be shut out of play, and the other pieces cannot come to its aid. Therefore it was stronger to play

36...a6, in order to open at least one line on the queenside, at the cost of the pawn.

37.f4 d3 38.♖xd3 ♖xd3 39.♗xd3 ♗d4 40.e5 g6 41.♖h1

Thus, White fully realises his plan. He practically has an extra piece in the attack, since the bishop on d4 is of little use.

41...♔g7

It was slightly better to keep the king in the corner and play the rook to g7: 41...♖g8 42.♗c4 ♖g7. However, there is no doubt that in this case, White, by combining threats on both flanks, should win.

42.♕e4 b6



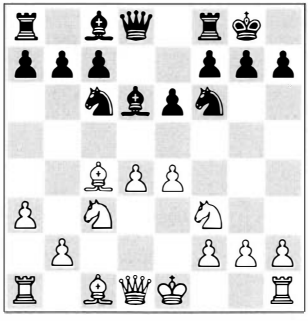
43.♗c4

This was the sealed move, and Black resigned without resuming. Botvinnik indicated the following more than convincing variations: 43...♕d7 44.♕c6 ♕xc6+ 45.bxc6 ♖c8 46.e6! or 43...♕e7 44.g5 ♖c8 (he has to cover c6, otherwise White plays 45.♕c6 and 46.♕f6+!) 45.f5 gxf5 46.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 47.♕h4+ ♔g7 48.♕h6#.

Botvinnik's sealed move is definitely best from a practical point of view, as White strengthens his position without taking on any further responsibilities (it is easy to miscalculate after five hours' tension). For a complete picture, there is also the more forcing computer path to victory: 43.f5! ♕xe5 (43...gxf5 44.gxf5 ♕xe5 45.♕b7+; 43...♗xe5 44.♖e1) 44.♕b7+ ♔f6 (44...♖f7 45.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 46.fxg6+ ♔h6 47.gxf7) 45.fxg6 hxg6 46.♕c6+ ♔e7 47.♖h7+.

Game 42
Berkes,Ferenc
Sax,Gyula
Heviz 2003

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.a3 dxc4 7.♗xc4 ♗d6 8.♘f3 ♘c6 9.e4



It is interesting that, after his return match with Tal, Botvinnik came to the conclusion that the plan with 9.e4 e5 10.d5 is the most promising for White.

9...e5 10.d5 ♘e7

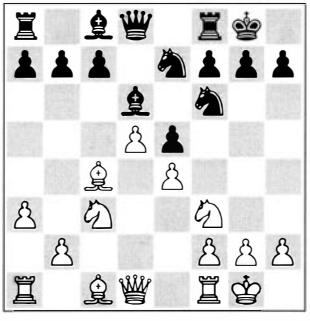
There is no precise theory on this system at present, only general outlines of what each side wants.

11.0-0

The plan of a pawn storm on the kingside with **11.h3 ♘g6 12.g4** is not very effective, in my opinion. Black does not have to force the door open

and play ...f7-f5 at all costs, but can instead switch plans and free his game with ...c7-c6. After this, White has to leave his king in the centre, since on either flank he comes under attack. Possible then is 12...♕e7 13.♕c2 c6! 14.dxc6 bxc6 15.♗d3 ♖b8 16.♗g5 ♗e6 17.♘h4?! ♘f4∓ Friedel-Moiseenko, Edmonton 2008.

The pin is also not dangerous: **11.♗g5 ♘g6 12.g3** 12.♘h4 ♘f4 13.♕f3 h6 14.♗xf6 ♕xf6 15.g3 a6 16.♗f1 g6 17.♘g2? (17.gxf4 ♕xh4 18.f5 ♗c5⇄) 17...♘xd5! 18.♕xf6 ♘xf6∓ I.Ivanov-Hracek, New York 1995. **12...h6 13.♗d2 a6 14.h3 b5 15.♗f1 ♗b7 16.♗e3 c6 17.dxc6 ♗xc6 18.♘d2 ♕e7 19.♗g2 ♖fd8 20.♖c1** draw, Petrosian-Lengyel, Siegen 1970. The final position is even slightly better for Black.



11...♘g6

Whether slightly earlier or slightly later, Black has to play the prophylactic move **11...a6**, in order to oppose his opponent's aggressive plans on the queenside. Now after **12.b4** (the cautious 12.♖e1 h6 13.h3 ♘g6 14.♗e3 should not cause Black great problems, e.g. 14...♕e7 15.♖c1 ♗d7 16.♗f1 ♖ac8! – the correct idea. White has prepared excellently for the kingside attack, but Black has already started counterplay on the opposite wing. 17.♘d2 b5 18.a4 ♖b8 19.axb5 axb5 20.♗d3 ♖fc8 21.♕e2 ♕e8⇄ Cherepkov-Vaganian, Sochi 1969) **12...♘g6 13.♘e1** Black should immediately create complications on the queenside: **13...b5!** Direct play along the lines of 'attacking the king at all costs' can rebound on Black: 13...♕e7 14.♘d3 ♘f4 15.♗xf4 exf4 16.e5! ♗xe5 17.♖e1 ♘d7 18.♘xe5 ♘xe5 19.♕d4 ♖e8 20.♕xf4 ♗d7 21.♖e3± Portisch-Hamann, Halle 1963. **14.♗b3 a5 15.bxa5?!** Equal play results from 15.♗e3 axb4 16.axb4 ♖xa1 17.♕xa1 ♗xb4 18.♘xb5=. **15...♖xa5 16.♘d3 b4 17.♘a4 bxa3 18.♗d2 ♖a8 19.♘ac5 ♕e7 20.♕c2 ♘d7∓** Brito Garcia-Miladinovic, Las Palmas 1994.

The move **11...♗g4** cannot be recommended; White does not need to be provoked into the move h2-h3, since he wants to play it anyway, in order to secure his bishop's square on e3: **12.♗g5 ♘g6 13.h3 ♗d7 14.♗e2** Piece pressure on the queenside does not bring White particular achievements: 14.♕b3 ♗c8 15.♖ac1 a6 16.♗d3 h6 17.♗e3 ♘h5⇄. **14...h6 15.♗e3 ♕e7 16.♖c1 a6 17.♖e1 ♘h5** Black carries out his attacking plan consequentially, although it is not all that dangerous for the opponent. **18.♗f1 ♘hf4**



Analysis diagram

19.♘e2 White's desire to get rid of the piece standing threateningly over his king is understandable, but the more cold-blooded continuation 19.♘d2!? also deserved consideration. The knight can be useful on the queenside, whilst the queen gets a path to f3, and maybe even h5. In addition, White has the tactical threat of ♔h2 and g2-g3. **19...♕f6 20.♘xf4 ♘xf4 21.♔h2 g5 22.♘g1 ♕g6 23.g3 ♘h5 24.♗d3±** Bondarevsky-Levenfish, Leningrad 1947. White's chances are superior: he has driven the knight from f4 and prevented the break ...f7-f5, whilst Black is clearly weaker on the queenside.

12.♖e1

Typical King's Indian play starts after **12.♘e1** ♘e8 13.♘d3 ♔h8 14.♗e3 f5 15.f3 f4 16.♗f2 ♕g5 17.♕d2 ♘h4 18.♗xh4 ♕xh4 19.♖f2 a6 20.b4 g5 21.h3 ♘f6⇄ Rabar-Nedeljkovic, Zagreb 1953. The bishop is very well-placed on d6: it defends the important points c7 and e5 and, unlike in the King's Indian, does not get under the feet of its own heavy pieces as they regroup on the g-file.



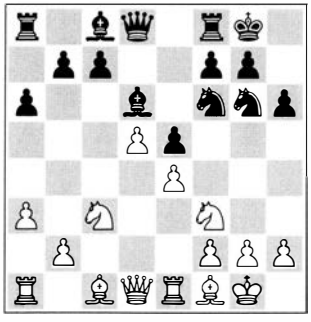
12...h6

A) **12...a6 13.♗f1 h6** – see 12...h6 13.♗f1 a6;

B) As Botvinnik pointed out, **12...♘h5** 13.♗f1 ♘hf4 14.♗e3 f5 favours White because of 15.g3! fxe4 16.♘xe4 ♘h3+ 17.♗xh3!? (possibly even stronger than Botvinnik's 17.♔h1 with the idea of ♘g1) 17...♗xh3 18.♘fg5 ♗f5 19.♘e6 ♗xe6 20.dxe6 ♕c8 21.♕d5±;

C) The following game once again shows that Black is not so badly prepared for an immediate attack on the queenside: **12...♗d7** 13.b4 a5 14.♖b1 axb4 15.axb4 ♕e7 16.♕b3 h6 17.♘b5 ♖fc8 18.♗d2 ♕e8 19.♘xd6 cxd6 20.♕d3 ♖c7⇄ Ilivitsky-Averbakh, Sverdlovsk 1951.

13.♗f1 a6



14.b4

After **14.h3 ♘h7** we reach a position from Ibragimov-Gipslis, Alushta 1993, examined in the note to White's 12th move in the game Vaisser-Gulko.

14...♗g4

I repeat: Black should not try to provoke h2-h3, because it is quite useful for White. The immediate **14...♗d7** deserves consideration, e.g. 15.♖a2 ♕e7 16.g3 ♖fd8 17.♕b3 ♘h7 18.h4 ♘f6 19.♘h2 b5 20.♗d2 (Marinelli-Vl. Kovacevic, Makarska 1995) 20...c6⇄.

15.h3 ♗d7 16.♗e3

An excellent place for the bishop, at a moment when Black does not have the reply ...♘g4.

16...♘h7 17.♖c1

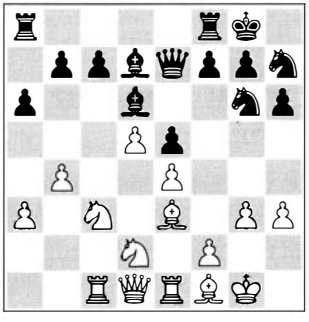
It looks tempting to bring the knight via d2 to b3 or c4. White adopts this plan a little later.

17...♕f6 18.g3 ♕e7?!

The idea of this move is that after the immediate 18...♘g5 the reply 19.♘xg5 hxg5 20.♕h5 is very unpleasant, and Black loses a pawn, since the piece sacrifice 20...♘f4 can hardly be correct here, whilst after 20...♗e7 there follows 21.d6! with even worse consequences for Black.

Even so, the move 18...♕e7 is too direct; Black should forget about the kingside for the moment and pay attention to the other flank: 18...a5!? 19.bxa5 ♖xa5 20.a4 ♖fa8⇄.

19.♘d2!



19...♘g5?!

As Garry Kasparov rather strikingly expressed it in a similar situation, 'played with the directness of a Roman'. Stronger here was 19...a5!?, although after 20.♘c4! the situation is already not so nice for Black, as a move earlier. Now after 20...axb4 21.axb4 taking the pawn is very risky: 21...♗xb4?! (it is better to settle for 21...♖fb8±) 22.d6! ♗xd6 (22...cxd6? 23.♘d5, and Black loses the bishop) 23.♘d5 ♕e6 24.♘xd6 cxd6 (24...♕xd6 25.♗c5+−) 25.♘c7 ♕f6 26.♘xa8 ♖xa8 27.♕d3±. Formally, Black has more than sufficient material for the exchange, but his knights are very badly placed.

20.h4! ♘h7 21.♘c4

Even stronger is 21.h5 ♘h8 22.♘c4, and one can only feel sorry for the ♘h8.

21...♘f6

Black misses the chance he was offered – after 21...♖fc8 22.h5 he would have been able to retreat the knight to f8.

22.h5 ♘h8 23.♗e2 ♘h7 24.♗g4

This exchange is tempting, although it is not clear how favourable it is for White. The simple 24.♘xd6 cxd6 25.♘a4 deserved consideration, starting a raid on the queenside.

24...♘f6 25.♗xd7

Rybka recommends White to retreat the bishop with 25.♗f3!?.

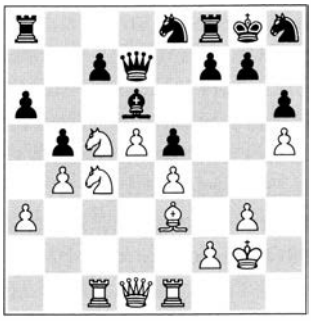
25...♕xd7 26.♔g2 ♘e8?!

26...b5!? 27.♘a5 ♘g4 28.♗c5 f5± looks more promising.

27.♘a4!

An accurately calculated tactical operation.

27...b5 28.♘c5



28...♕c8

Black can win two pieces for a rook, but these pieces are the knights on h8 and e8, the sight of which brings tears to one's eyes: 28...♗xc5 29.♘xe5 ♕d6 30.♘c4! bxc4 31.♗xc5 ♕d7 32.♗xf8 ♔xf8 33.♕d4±.

29.♘a5 f5

Tantamount to desperation: Black gives up the important square e6, without a fight. However, at least the further logical course of the game is disrupted, and probably, the game was now affected by time-trouble.

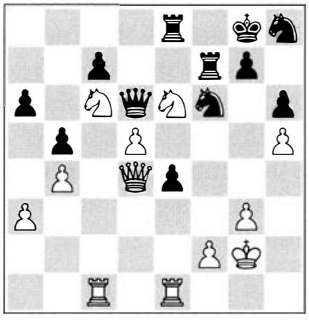
30.♘e6 ♖f7 31.exf5 ♖xf5 32.♘c6 ♕d7 33.♕g4

After 33.g4! ♖f6 34.g5 hxg5 35.♗xg5 ♖f5 36.♕g4 ♕f7 37.f3+– Black is practically stalemated.

33...♖f7 34.♕d1 ♘f6 35.♗c5 e4

An attempt to activate his pieces to some extent at least.

36.♕d4 ♖e8 37.♗xd6 ♕xd6



38.♘e5?

A terrible oversight. He should defend the queen with 38.♖cd1, and after for example 38...♘g4 39.♖d2 ♘f6 40.♘c5+– Black is in a bad way.

38...♖fe7?

Black misses a chance for the first time: 38...♖xe6! 39.♘xf7 ♘xf7 40.♖c6 ♕e5∓.

39.♘c6 ♖d7 40.♘e5?

Now confusion reigns. Here 40.♖cd1 ♘f7 41.♖xe4 ♘d8⇄, was already not so good for White, but he can retain the advantage after 40.♖c5! ♘xd5 41.♕xe4.

40...♕xe6! 41.♘xd7 ♕xd7 42.♖c5 ♘f7

To make matters worse, the knight has emerged from its prison. White could not stand this, and acknowledged defeat.

Chapter Five

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.a3



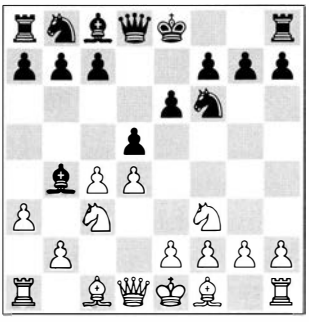
A direct attempt to secure the bishop pair and strengthen his centre. White achieves both of these aims, but somewhat delays his development. So once again, we encounter one of the most interesting questions in chess: which is more important, the dynamic plusses of the position or the long-lasting positional features? Every chess player answers this question in his own way, and sometimes, over the course of time, this answer may change. In this chapter, for example, we will see how Ragozin's attitude evolved.

Today, this system is not considered dangerous for Black. After the practically forced 5...♗xc3+ 6.bxc3, he has at least two good replies: 6...♘e4 and 6...dxc4, after which play stays within the boundaries of the Ragozin. The most popular continuations are 6...c5 and 6...0-0, which mostly lead to a Nimzo-Indian Defence. Of these two lines, we will only examine castling, and that briefly.

The black knight on e4 is very well placed, of course, so White strives to exchange it off as soon as possible. As a result, the position simplifies further, and because Black's central bastion is quite solid (it is hard to get rid of the pawn on d5), it is hard to activate the bishop pair, and the game soon equalises. A more tense position arises after 6...dxc4, when Black tries to keep the gambit pawn. Here the issue is one of the light-square strategy and the central blockade.

Game 43
Lilienthal,Andor
Ragozin,Viacheslav
Moscow 1936

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.a3



'This move, immediately clarifying the position, is characteristic of Lilienthal, who rarely indulges in journeys through uncharted waters in the opening. The text gives White the bishop pair, but does little to hinder Black's development, and is therefore not of great theoretical value' – Ragozin.

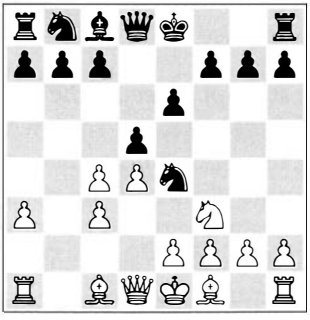
It is interesting that within three years (quite a short time period for those days, when information travelled at a snail's pace), Ragozin had changed his opinion: 'The lack of a dark-squared bishop significantly hampers Black's counterplay, and it is not easy for him to utilise the extra tempo even to equalise, yet alone secure an advantage.'

And here is Lipnitsky, who, as usual, was rather more optimistic in his assessment of Black's chances: 'It seems to us that, nowadays, Ragozin would question this opinion, especially as the advantage of the two bishops is illusory here. The lack of a dark-squared bishop, as has been shown many times (including in Ragozin's own games) does not stop Black developing active counterplay, especially plans involving play on the light squares.'

In contemporary play, as we have already said, this line is very rarely seen, because Black has various tries and tested means of securing good play.

5...♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘e4

The move **6...dxc4** will be examined later in the game Lisitsyn-Ragozin, and **6...0-0** on the basis of Azizian-Lempert, whilst we will not deal at all with the popular **6...c5**, since this leads to a pure Nimzo-Indian Defence, without any Ragozin features.



7.♘d2

White wants to eliminate the ♘e4 and is prepared to spend a couple of tempi to do so. More popular, and probably stronger it would seem, is the developing move **7.♕c2!?**, for example: **7...c5** 7...0-0 8.e3 ♘d7 9.♗d3 ♘df6 10.0-0 b6 11.♘e5 ♗b7 12.f3 ♘d6 13.c5± D.Collins-Kujovic, Parsippany 2005. **8.e3 ♕a5 9.♗b2 cxd4** 9...♗d7 10.a4 cxd4 (Grübling-Junker, Pinneberg 1991) 11.exd4 ♘c6 12.♗d3 f5 13.0-0±. **10.exd4 f5 11.♗d3 0-0 12.0-0** The centralised knight looks nice, but is not so threatening – White can gradually drive it away and exploit the weakness of the dark squares in his opponent's posi-

tion. **12...♘c6 13.♖fe1 ♗d7 14.♕b3 ♘f6 15.cxd5 exd5 16.c4±** Najdorf-Tartakower, Venice 1948.

7...♘xd2

After **7...♘xc3 8.♕c2 ♘e4 9.♘xe4 dxe4 10.♕xe4** White wins back the pawn, retaining the advantage of the bishop pair, and brings his queen to a strong centralised position. Black's only plus is that he can complete his development slightly quicker (in particular, his king is already prepared to leave the centre), but this is not enough to equalise. Play could continue: **10...c5!? 11.e3** It looks very suspicious to continue 11.d5?! 0-0 12.e3 exd5 13.cxd5 ♖e8 14.♕c4 ♕f6, and Black seizes the initiative. **11...0-0 12.♗d2 cxd4 13.exd4 ♘c6 14.♗c3 e5!?** Black must stir up complications, which he could also try to do by 14...f5 15.♕d3 ♕g5, but here the quiet 16.♕g3!? stems the opponent's initiative. **15.dxe5 ♘xe5**

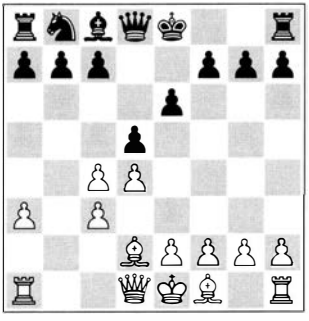


Analysis diagram

16.♖d1 Neither the bishop nor the queen can capture the knight: 16.♗xe5? ♕a5+ 17.♔e2 ♗g4+ 18.♔e3 ♖ad8, and White comes under an attack, whilst 16.♕xe5? ♖e8 is completely bad. **16...♘d7 17.♗e2 ♖e8 18.♕g4 f6 19.0-0 ♕e7 20.♖fe1 ♘f8 21.♕h5 ♕f7** In this position, the Danish players Steen Clausen and Kai Bjerring agreed a draw (Copenhagen 1991). This is rather a strange decision, since White's chances are superior, e.g. 22.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 23.♗h5+ ♘g6 24.♖xe8 ♔xe8 25.♖b1, and it is hard for Black to complete the development of his queenside.

7...f5 is also insufficient for equality. White simply exchanges knights, brings his bishop to f4, taking control of the weakened central dark squares, and completes his development, e.g. 8.♘xe4 fxe4 9.♗f4 0-0 10.e3 c5 11.♕d2 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘c6 13.♖c1 ♔h8 14.♗e2± Teschner-Horne, Hastings 1953/54.

8.♗xd2



8...dxc4

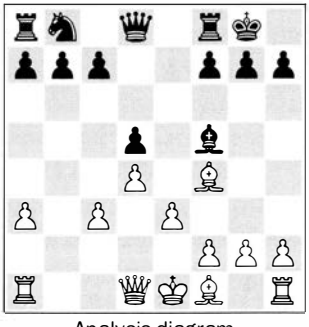
'This conceding of the centre is not dangerous, since Black speeds up the development of his pieces and can start counterplay in good time' – Ragozin.

'A modern view of the problem of the centre. Black does not prevent the establishment of a white pawn centre by purely mechanical means, i.e. by keeping his pawn on d5. Instead, he gives himself the chance of active piece play against the central squares' – Lipnitsky.

This move is certainly not bad (although it is even better if played two moves earlier), but Black also has reli-

able alternatives. Here, for example, is how this position was handled by the great Ragozin expert, Genna Sosonko: **8...c5!?** 9.e3 ♘c6 10.cxd5 ♕xd5 11.c4 ♕d6 (thanks to his better development, Black creates strong pressure on the opponent's pawn centre, so White decides to go for simplification) 12.dxc5 ♕xc5 13.♕b1 0-0 14.♗b4 ♘xb4 15.axb4 ♕g5 16.♖a5 ♕f6 17.♗d3 h6 18.0-0 b6 19.♖a2 ♗b7, and Black has solved his opening problems very effectively, Köhler-Sosonko, Germany Verbandsliga 1998/99.

Also possible is **8...0-0 9.cxd5** The immediate 9.♗f4 is worth consideration, followed by e2-e3, so as to develop his bishop and not open the diagonal for the black bishop on c8. **9...exd5 10.♗f4 ♗f5 11.e3**



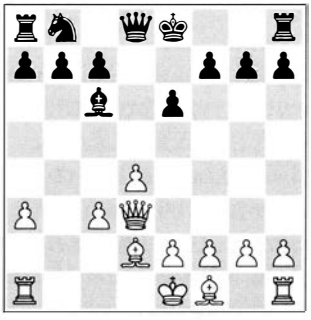
Analysis diagram

11...c6 It seems to me that Black should strive for more dynamic play, and from this point of view, it is worth studying 11...♘c6!? 12.g4 ♗e4 13.f3 ♗g6 14.h4 h5⇄. **12.g4! ♗e6** Here, it is already risky to play 12...♗e4 13.f3 ♗g6 14.h4 h5 15.♕b3 b6 16.c4! – the knight is still stuck on b8, thanks to which White's initiative becomes very significant. **13.♗d3 ♘d7 14.h4 ♖e8 15.f3 ♘f8 16.♔f2 ♖c8 17.♕b3 ♕e7 18.♖ab1 b6 19.h5 c5 20.♕b2 c4** Interesting is 20...♗d7!? with the idea of ...♘e6-g5, slowing down the advance of White's pawns, since after f3-f4 there can now follow ...♘g5-e4. **21.♗c2 ♗d7**, Anastasian-Korzubov, Moscow 1983. Black has come to this same plan in delayed form, and here **22.♕b4!** looks very powerful, strengthening control over the dark squares. The ending, with the two bishops and mobile centre is better for White, whilst avoiding the queen exchange is probably even worse. For example, after 22...♕d8 there could follow 23.♕d6!.

We will see the move **8...♘c6** in the game Bartel-Miroshnichenko.

9.♕a4+ ♗d7 10.♕xc4 ♗c6 11.♕d3

White prepares to seize the centre with e2-e4. It was possible to play **11.f3** with the same idea, but then Black obtains excellent play by placing the queen on h5 and castling queenside. In this case, it becomes clear that the white queen is badly placed on c4, e.g. **11...♕h4+!? 12.g3 ♕h5** This manoeuvre is typical of the Chigorin Defence variation, where the bishop also ends up on c6: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘f3 ♗g4 4.cxd5 ♗xf3 5.dxc6 ♗xc6 6.♘c3 e6 7.e4 ♗b4 8.f3 ♕h4+ 9.g3 ♕h5 etc. The idea here is the same – hit the centre with ...f7-f5. **13.♗g2 ♘d7 14.0-0 0-0-0**, and now not 15.e4? because of 15...♗b5.



11...f5

Viacheslav Ragozin severely criticises this move (too severely, in my opinion – he even goes so far as to award it a question mark): 'Too direct! The move ...f7-f5 would gain significantly in strength if it attacked the white pawn centre. Therefore, it was better to play 11...0-0, forcing 12.e4, and then 12...f5!! 13.e5 (13.f3 fxe4 14.fxe4 ♕h4+) 13...♘d7 with a great position. The game Pillsbury-Chigorin, St Petersburg 1895-6, is the classic example of how to play such positions.'

12.f3 0-0 13.g3 ♘d7 14.♗g2



'It gradually becomes clear that Black's 11th move only stopped the advance e2-e4 for a very short time. White, having completed his development, will get in e2-e4 with great strength, since with a mobile white centre, the position of the black central pawns on e6 and f5 is a weakness. The fact that he has finished his development allows Black to anticipate the coming danger' – Ragozin.

14...e5!

Black manages to prevent e2-e4 after all, thanks to his advantage in development.

15.0-0

A small tactical nuance: after 15.d5? there follows 15...♘c5, and Black wins a pawn.

After **15.dxe5** Ragozin advises Black to enter the endgame: **15...♘xe5** 16.♕xd8 ♖axd8 17.♗f4 ♖fe8 18.♔f2, and here he obtains excellent play with 18...♘c4 19.♗xc7 ♖d2 20.♖he1 ♖c2 or 20...g5. But maybe it is even stronger to play **15...♕e8** 16.♕c4+ ♔h8 17.♗f4 ♘xe5 18.♗xe5 ♕xe5 19.f4 ♕e3 20.♗xc6 bxc6.

15...f4 16.dxe5!

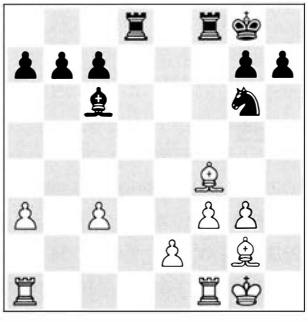
The light-squared bishop must be blockaded; after 16.g4 exd4 17.♕xd4 ♘b6∓ Black obtains the advantage.

Black is fine after 16.e4 fxe3 17.♗xe3 exd4 18.♗xd4 ♘b6.

16...fxg3 17.hxg3

17.f4 gxh2+ 18.♔xh2 ♗xg2 19.♔xg2 ♕e8!? is risky for White, when Black transfers the queen towards the enemy king, and here winning the pawn on b7 is dangerous: 20.♕d5+ ♔h8 21.♕xb7? ♕g6+ 22.♔f2 ♘xe5! with a very strong attack.

17...♘xe5 18.♕xd8 ♖axd8 19.♗f4 ♘g6



'A very difficult position to assess. At first glance, Black stands significantly better. Indeed, he has more space; however, with concrete play, the possession of the two bishops allows White to liquidate the opponent's initiative' – Ragozin.

The other version of the pawn sacrifice also deserves attention – 19...♘c4 20.♗xc7 ♖d2 21.♖fe1 g5!?, but here too, the assessment of the position is far from clear.

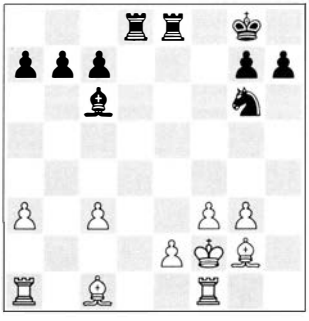
20.♗c1

Ragozin criticises this move, suggesting 20.♗xc7 instead. But here too, after for example 20...♖d2 21.e4 ♖c8 22.♗f4 ♘xf4 23.gxf4 ♗a4, Black's initiative is very strong.

20...♖fe8

The immediate 20...♖f5! is very strong, transferring the rook along the 5th rank to c5, to win the c3 pawn.

21.♔f2



21...♘e5?!

'Not a logical follow-up, to say the least. Taking advantage of the tied-up and inactive white pieces, Black should have begun actions with his rooks' – Ragozin.

Indeed, he should have chosen between 21...♖e5 and 21...♖d5.

22.♗f4

The bishop seizes the chance to come into play. Black's initiative comes to nothing.

22...♘c4



23.♖a2

Lilienthal is careful. It is clear that he should not take the pawn: 23.♗xc7?! ♖d2 24.♖fe1 ♘b2! 25.♔f1 g5, and White's position again becomes tricky. However, it was perfectly possible to make the thematic move with the e-pawn: 23.e4! ♘e5 24.♖fd1 ♘d3+ 25.♔e3±.

23...♖d5 24.e4

Here too, 24.♗xc7?! g5! 25.g4 ♘e3 26.♖c1 ♗b5∓ looks dubious. White has now finally got his e-pawn moving, and equalised the game (if he had played it a move earlier, he could even have counted on some advantage).

24...♖a5?!

Stronger was 24...♖c5, so as to limit the dark-squared bishop with ...g7-g5. If White takes on c7, there follows 25...♗xe4!

25.♗xc7 ♖xa3?!

After this second inaccuracy in a row, it is already Black who can experience difficulties. Even now, with the loss of a tempo, it was better to play 25...♖c5 with the same idea – ...♗xe4 and ...g7-g5.

26.♖xa3 ♘xa3



27.♗f4?!

This retreat allows the knight to occupy a good position on c4. Stronger was 27.♖a1! ♘b5 28.♗f4 a6 29.♖c1! (but not 29.c4?! ♘d4), and the knight is driven to the edge of the board. After 29...♔f7 30.♔e3± White gradually strengthens his position, and sets his central pawns in motion. Then it would not be easy for Black to defend.

27...♘c4 28.♖a1 a6

Of course, bad is 28...a5? 29.♗f1, and Black loses a pawn.

29.♗f1 ♗b5 30.♖b1 ♖c8 31.♗h3 ♖e8 32.♗f1

Lilienthal is peaceably inclined. It was still possible to fight for an advantage after 32.♖d1 ♘e5 33.♗xe5 ♖xe5 34.♔e3, although it is hard to believe that Black cannot hold this position – the passed a-pawn gives him sufficient counterchances.

32...♖c8 33.♗xc4+ ♖xc4 34.♗e5

Draw.

Game 44
Bartel,Mateusz
Miroshnichenko,Evgeny
Austria 2010/11

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘e4 7.♘d2 ♘xd2 8.♗xd2 ♘c6!?



This move fully answers to the spirit of the position – Black immediately begins a fight for the light squares, especially the square c4.

9.e3 ♘a5 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗d3 ♗e6 12.♖b1

12.♕b1!? is worth consideration, hampering Black's kingside castling. However, White has a different idea – he does not prevent his opponent putting the king on g8, but hopes quickly to organise an attack in that sector.

12...b6 13.♕h5 g6?!

He should not weaken the dark squares without special need. More cautious

was 13...♘c4 14.♗c1 ♘d6 with the idea of ...♕d7 and exchanging light-squared bishops on f5.

14.♕e5

White retains a small initiative after **14.♕h6!?** ♕e7 15.0-0 0-0-0 16.e4 dxe4 17.♗xe4 ♘c4 18.♖fe1.

14...0-0 15.h4!? ♖e8 16.♕f4 ♕d7 17.h5 ♗f5!



This timely manoeuvre allows Black to repulse the threats to his king and transfer play into positional channels.

18.hxg6

Unfavourable is 18.♗xf5?! ♕xf5 19.♕xf5 gxf5 20.h6 ♘c4 21.a4 f4, and the advantage transfers to Black.

18...♗xg6!

Correct; after 18...fxg6 19.♗xf5 ♕xf5 20.♕xf5 gxf5 21.♖h5 ♖f8 22.♔e2 ♘c4 23.♖g1! White retains definite pressure on the kingside.

19.♕g3 ♔f8

Rybka promises Black an easy life after 19...♘c4 20.♗xc4 dxc4 21.f3 c5, but from a purely human point of view, such a position is not so attractive: the dark-square holes stand out, the bishop on d2 is gradually getting out of his restraints and then the black king will feel uncomfortable.

20.e4!?

Without light-squared bishops, White's position will lack prospects, so this pawn sacrifice is virtually forced.

20...dxe4

In the variation 20...♗xe4 21.♗h6+ ♔e7 22.♗g5+ ♔f8 (22...f6? 23.♗xe4 ♔d8 24.♗xf6+ ♔c8 25.♗e5 dxe4 26.♕e3±) White has at least perpetual check – 23.♗h6+, and can also fight for more after 23.♔f1!?.

21.♗b5 c6 22.♗h6+ ♔g8 23.♗e2 ♕e6 24.0-0 ♘c4 25.a4 ♘d6



Bit by bit, Black is strengthening the position of his pieces; now he transfers his knight closer to the centre.

26.♗g4

In principle, the two bishops and dark-square play should give White enough compensation for the pawn, although he is obliged to play very precisely, to maintain the dynamic balance.

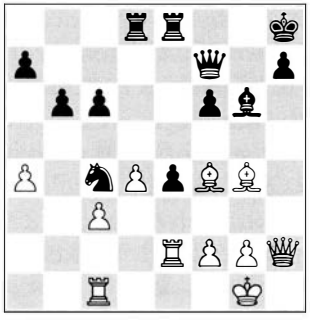
26...♕e7

The set-up 26...♘f5 27.♕h3 ♕f6 seems rather artificial, but was also possible.

27.♗f4 ♖ad8 28.♖fe1 f6

Black begins to fill up the holes in his position.

29.♖bc1 ♔h8 30.♕h3 ♕f7 31.♕h2 ♘c4 32.♖e2



Lacking an active plan, White marks time, but significantly worsens the position of his pieces. I think he was wrong to move the queen to h2 and leave the b-file with his rook.

32...♖e7

Black could have obtained a serious advantage after 32...c5! 33.dxc5 f5 34.♗h3 bxc5.

33.♖ce1 ♖de8 34.♕h4 a5 35.♗h3 ♗h5?!

One imagines that Black had little time left for the last few moves up to the time control, so Evgeny Miroshnichenko wanted to get past the time control and only then undertake any sort of decisive action. However, the delay costs him. Correct was 35...b5!, drawing White's attention to the queenside.

36.g4! ♗g6 37.g5

The only pawn on a dark square now has to leave his post.

37...f5 38.♗f1 ♕d5 39.♕g3 ♔g8 40.♖b1 e3?!

Illogical, to say the least. Why suddenly sharpen the position on move 40? More consequent was 40...♗h5 41.♖ee1 b5∓.

41.♗g2

Black's idea is justified after 41.fxe3?! ♘xe3! 42.♖xe3 ♖xe3 43.♗xe3 f4!, winning the exchange.

41...exf2+ 42.♖xf2 ♕d7 43.♗f1 ♖e1 44.♖xe1 ♖xe1 45.♖e2 ♖xe2 46.♗xe2



Over the last few moves, the position has simplified noticeably. Now Black's extra pawn does not play a significant role, since his pieces are not very active and are badly coordinated, whilst his king is exposed.

46...♗f7 47.g6!

Enabling White to force a draw.

47...hxg6 48.♗xc4 ♗xc4 49.♕xg6+ ♕g7 50.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 51.♗c7 b5 ½-½

Game 45
Lisitsyn,Georgy
Ragozin,Viacheslav
Leningrad 1939

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 dxc4

'This continuation seems better than 6...♘e4, since Black retains the knight, which plays an important role in the battle for the central squares d5 and e4' – Lipnitsky.



7.♕a4+

We will look at the move **7.e3** in the game Petrosian-Karaklajic.

7...♗d7

The alternative is **7...♘bd7 8.e3** The plan of a kingside fianchetto deserves consideration: 8.♕xc4 b6 (Mihok-Siklosi, Kecskemet 1989) 9.g3!? ♗b7 10.♗g2 0-0 11.♗f4±. **8...0-0 9.♕xc4 b6 10.♗e2 ♗b7 11.0-0 c5 12.a4 ♖c8 13.♕b3 ♕c7 14.♘d2 e5 15.♗a3 ♖fd8 16.♖ac1**± Alekhine-Fox, Bradley Beach 1929.

8.♕xc4 0-0

'Often one inaccuracy is enough to prevent the realisation of the best plan. In analysing the Ragozin Defence, we have seen a number of times that the pin of the ♘f6 is never desirable for Black. If Black allows it, it is only because he has concrete measures to deal with it (...h7-h6!, and then ...g7-g5!, as appropriate).

In this position, the pin after 9.♗g5! is extremely unpleasant for Black:

A) he has no dark-squared bishop, which could return to e7;

B) the plan of taking over the central squares with his pieces becomes unrealisable. In addition, a position arises in which the two bishops give White the advantage.

Thus 8...0-0 is a typical mistake, since after 9.♗g5! Black's whole opening strategy is busted. Instead of 8...0-0 he should have played 8...♗c6!, and if 9.♗g5, then 9...♕d5! 10.♕xd5 (or 10.♕d3 ♘e4!) 10...♗xd5 with an equal game, whilst after 9.e3 Black could now castle' – Lipnitsky.

Ragozin later used this recommendation and played **8...♗c6** in this position. Of course, he attracted followers too. Here are a few examples:



Analysis diagram

A) **9.e3** ♘bd7 10.♕b4 (after 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♖e8 we have transposed into Lisitsyn-Ragozin) 10...a5 11.♕b1 ♘e4 12.c4 0-0 13.♗b2 f5 14.♗e2 ♘g5 15.♕d1 ♘xf3+ 16.♗xf3 ♗xf3

17.♕xf3 (Petrosian-Uusi, Vilnius 1958) 17...♘b6! 18.♕e2 ♘a4 19.0-0 b6⇄;

B) **9.♗g5** ♘bd7!? (in my opinion, Lipnitsky's recommendation 9...♕d5 is weaker because of 10.♕xd5 ♗xd5 11.♘d2±) 10.♘d2 h6 11.♗h4 a6 12.a4 ♗d5 13.♕b4 c5 14.dxc5 a5 15.♕d4 ♕c7 16.e4 e5 17.♕d3 ♗e6⇄ D.Yudin-Gusev, Tula 2000;

C) **9.♘e5 ♗d5!** 9...0-0 10.♗g5 ♕d5 (Fred-Ragozin, Helsinki 1946) 11.♕xd5! ♗xd5 12.f3 b6 13.e4±. **10.♕a4+ ♘c6 11.c4 ♗e4 12.♗b2 0-0 13.♖d1 ♘h5! 14.♘xc6 bxc6!?** 14...♗xc6 15.♕a5 ♘f6 16.f3±. **15.e3** 15.♕a5!?. **15...♕g5 16.h4 ♕g6 17.♖d2 ♖ab8**∓ Svirin-Alexandrov, Podolsk 1990.



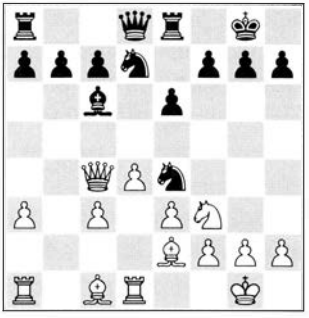
9.e3

'It is interesting how often in tournament play, two very strong players fail to see an obvious move. Of course, he should have played 9.♗g5!' – Lipnitsky. Indeed, after 9...♗c6 10.♘e5 ♗d5 11.♕d3 c5 12.f3 h6 13.♗h4 cxd4 14.cxd4± White obtains a stable advantage.

9...♗c6 10.♗e2 ♘bd7 11.0-0 ♖e8

Possibly the immediate **11...♘e4** was more accurate, e.g.: 12.♕d3 ♘d6?! (Black does not manage to fasten onto the c4-square; better is 12...f5 13.c4 ♖f6, trying to create counterplay on the kingside) 13.c4 e5 14.♕c3! exd4 15.♘xd4 ♗e4 16.♗b2 ♘f6 17.f3 ♗g6 18.e4± Chandler-Hess, Dortmund 1980.

12.♖d1 ♘e4



'Naturally, White will not wish to put up with this knight, and will rapidly drive it away. What does Black achieve? The truth is that Ragozin uses the square e4 as a jumping-off spot, to transfer his knight from f6 to the more active spot on d6, from where it looks at the light squares c4 and e4, and also b5 and f5. In addition, the knight opens the path for the queen to come to the kingside, which could be very useful at the right moment. And finally, Black prevents White developing his bishop to a3, since the continuation 13.a4 ♘b6 14.♕b3 ♗xa4 15.♖xa4 ♘xa4 16.♕xa4 ♘xc3 17.♕c2 ♘xd1∓ leads to a position in which White has to fight for a draw' – Lipnitsky.

13.♗b2

13.♘e5? is bad because of **13...♕h4! 14.♖f1** 14.♘xc6 ♘b6! 15.♕d3 ♕xf2+ 16.♔h1 ♕h4 17.♔g1 ♘f2 18.♕d2 ♘xd1 19.♗f3 bxc6 20.♗xc6 ♘xe3 21.♕xe3 ♘d5 – Black keeps at least an extra pawn and a positional advantage. **14...♘d6 15.♕b3** 15.♕d3 ♘xe5

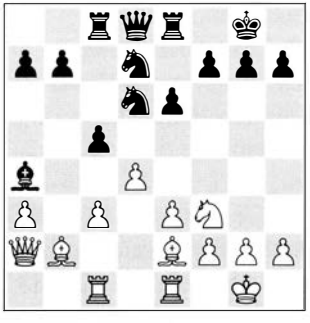
16.dxe5 ♕g5∓. **15...♘xe5 16.dxe5 ♕e4**, and Black wins a pawn.

After **13.♘d2** Black obtains satisfactory play with **13...♘d6 14.♕d3 e5! 15.c4 ♕g5!**, e.g. **16.♗f1** 16.d5 ♘c5 17.♕c3 ♗a4 18.♖e1 ♕h4∓. **16...♗a4 17.♖e1 c5 18.♗b2** 18.dxc5?! ♘f5 and Black wins back the pawn and obtains an excellent square on c5 for his knight. **18...e4 19.♕c3 b6** – in this position, it is difficult to regroup the white bishops, and his pieces in general are restricted.

The most unpleasant line for Black is **13.♕d3** with the idea of c4 and ♗b2. Then possible is 13...♕f6 14.♕c2 (14.c4? ♘dc5!) 14...♘d6 15.c4 ♗e4 16.♕c3±.

13...a5

'Starting to surround the centre from the queenside. Black's task is to deprive White's centre of its mobility, since if White succeeds in setting in motion his c- and e-pawns, as he is trying to do, then his position will be superior. However, it must be said that Black's plan involves a great weakening of his position, and therefore it was objectively stronger to play 13...♘d6 14.♕a2 ♗a4 15.♖e1 c5 16.♖ac1 ♖c8' – Ragozin.



Analysis diagram

'The variation given by Ragozin has a very interesting, original piece set-up. The bishop occupies a dominating position on a4, paralysing the whole white queenside. White's chances of a kingside attack are highly problematic, since it is hard to achieve the necessary regrouping. On 17.♗d1 Black replies not 17...♗xd1 18.♖exd1 with unpleasant pressure on the d-file (although even here, after 18...c4 19.♕b1 ♕a5 Black has nothing to complain about – V.B.), but 17...♕a5! maintaining the blockade' – Lipnitsky.

The reader may wonder why, in this variation, the white queen retreats to a2 and not d3? The answer is that in the latter case, Black could refrain from the line with 14...♗a4, which is less favourable for him with the queen on d3, and play instead 14...♘b6!. Then Black not only successfully controls the squares e4, c4, b5 and a4, not allowing the bishop on b2 out of its cage, but also threatens to penetrate with his own minor pieces on the weak light squares. 15.♘d2 fails to 15...♗b5 winning a pawn. In the variation 13...♘d6! 14.♕d3 ♘b6! the positional idea of the light-square strategy is seen very clearly' – Lipnitsky.

14.♕d3 b5

Black continues with his quite risky plan. Of course, **14...f5** was more cautious, but then White can play **15.c4** without hindrance.

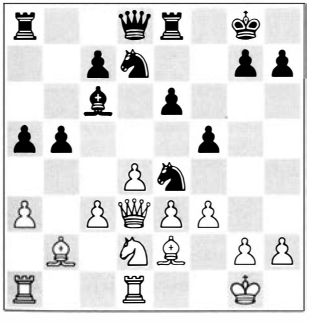


15.♘d2

White wishes gradually to relieve the light-square blockade, and advance his central pawns as conveniently as possible. However, in a battle between opponents of equal strength, one is rarely able to carry out one's plans without opposition; usually, in order to obtain some kind of positional plus, one has to make a concession as well. It was worth considering **15.c4!**, destroying the opponent's pawn flank. Then play could continue 15...bxc4 16.♕xc4 ♗d5 17.♕c2 ♖b8 18.♖ab1! f5 (18...♗b3? 19.♕xe4) 19.♗a1±. Having defended the weak squares on the queenside, White is ready further to regroup his pieces and gradually drive the enemy minor pieces out of the centre.

15...f5 16.f3

Black is fine after 16.♘xe4 fxe4 17.♕c2 ♘b6 18.c4 bxc4 19.♗xc4 ♘xc4 20.♕xc4 ♗d5 21.♕c2 a4, but here, as on the previous move, 16.c4 ♖b8 17.f3 looks good.



16...♘d6?!

In my opinion, Black overestimates his position and wrongly avoids simplifications. After 16...♘xd2 17.♕xd2 ♘b6 18.♗d3 ♕g5 he has satisfactory play.

17.e4

Even here, it was not too late for 17.c4, e.g. 17...bxc4 18.♘xc4 ♗b5 19.♕c2 ♘xc4 20.♗xc4 ♗xc4 21.♕xc4 ♘b6 22.♕c2±. The bishop on b2 cannot be called bad; after a small amount of preparation, White will advance e3-e4 (and, if possible, also d4-d5), and then almost all Black's pawns will be weak and in need of defence.

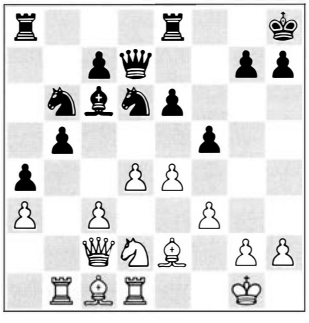
17...♘b6

Originally, Ragozin had planned to play 17...♘f6 here, with the idea of 18.e5 ♘d5 19.exd6? ♘f4, winning back the piece and obtaining a positional advantage, but he refrained from this variation because of 19.♖e1 (actually, 19.♗f1 is even stronger), 'and Black has to retreat'.

18.♗c1

Now he is not going to be able to play c3-c4 in the foreseeable future, therefore the position of the bishop on b2 has become absolutely prospectless. However, the diagonal c1-h6 is now open, and the bishop can find work here.

18...a4 19.♕c2 ♕d7 20.♖b1 ♔h8



'The position has been defined. White has a pawn centre, whilst Black has

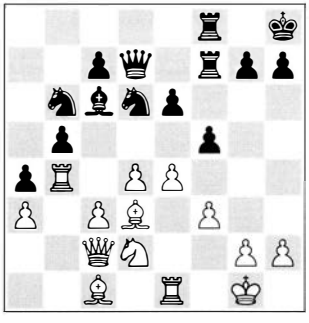
managed, for a long time to come, to prevent further white activity in the centre (e4-e5 gives up the d5-square, whilst c3-c4 loses material). What can Black undertake? On the queenside, he has obtained some advantage, and in the centre, neither side can really strengthen his position. Therefore, Black's activity switches to the kingside, and now his forces will be directed there' – Ragozin.

21.♖b4

This may appear to be a pure waste of time, since the b5 pawn cannot advance and c3-c4 is also not a threat. Surely the rook does nothing on b4? This is not quite so, as it controls the important square c4. At the same time, a simpler plan also deserved consideration: 21.♘f1, in order to bring the bishop to f4 and transfer the knight to e3.

21...♖f8 22.♗d3 ♖f7 23.♖e1 ♖af8?!

An inaccuracy; Black should first exchange pawns on e4.



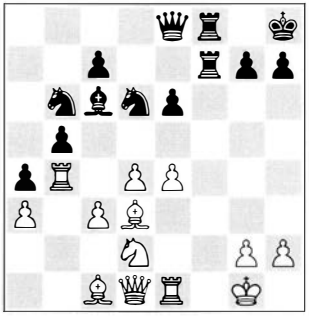
24.♕d1

White misses his chance: he could break the normal positional rules and try very concretely to go after the b5 pawn: 24.e5!? ♘b7 (the variation 24...♘dc4 25.♘xc4 ♘xc4 26.♗xc4 bxc4 27.♖xc4 shows that the rook is not so stupid on b4) 25.♖b1 (after 25.♕b1? ♘d5 White loses the exchange) 25...♘a5 26.♕b2 ♘bc4 27.♘xc4 ♘xc4 28.♕b4 ♕d5. Black has managed to hang on to the pawn, but after 29.h4±, he cannot dream of any attack on the kingside, of course. However, White's advantage is also of a symbolic nature, and the most likely result is a draw.

24...fxe4!

Lipnitsky considers this move dubious (because now the white knight can come to f3 and open the path for the ♗c1), and suggests instead 24...♕e8. However, in this case, 25.e5! followed by ♕e2 or c3-c4 is very strong.

25.fxe4 ♕e8



26.♖b2

This move allows Black to seize the initiative. White should occupy the freed square on f3 at once with 26.♘f3!. The knight threatens to come to e5, so Black must cover this square. But after 26...♘dc4 (the exchange sacrifice is interesting: 26...♘bc4 27.d5 (27.♘g5!?) 27...♖xf3! 28.gxf3 ♗a8 29.f4±) 27.♘g5 ♖f2 28.♗e2 White's chances are superior.

26...e5! 27.♘f3 ♘bc4 28.♖be2 ♗d7!

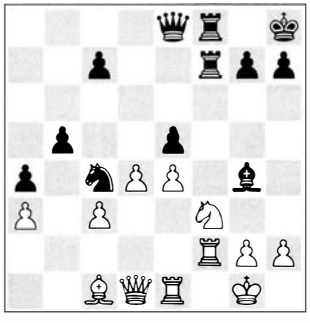
Black gathers all of his forces on the kingside.

29.♗xc4?

A depressing move: why give the opponent control of the light squares for no reason? After all, Black has two knights chasing one good outpost on c4, and the reserve knight on d6 is not very active.

29...♘xc4 30.♖f2 ♗g4?!

Rybka prefers not to bother chasing after beauty and logical strategic plans, but instead just to take a pawn with 30...♕e7!, since after the only defence 31.♖a2 there follows the crushing 31...♗g4. Indeed, why deprive oneself of the smallest joy? The direct move in the game allows White to put up a more tenacious resistance.



31.♕d3?

A more than strange decision – White agrees to accept a weak pawn on f3 on an open file, and to expose his king further. Of course, 31.♖ef1 was correct, when there could follow 31...h6 32.♕d3 ♗xf3 33.♖xf3 ♖xf3 34.♖xf3 ♕e7! 35.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 36.dxe5 ♕c5+ 37.♕d4 ♕xe5 38.♕xe5 ♘xe5, and it is not immediately clear whether Black can win this ending or not.

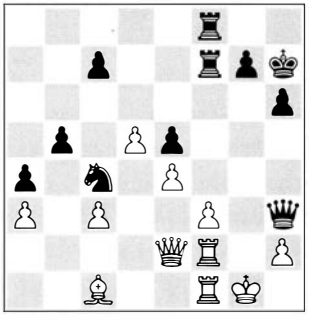
31...♗xf3 32.gxf3

It would have been more logical to exchange a pair of rooks with 32.♖xf3 ♖xf3 33.gxf3, in order to slightly weaken the attacking power of the black pieces. In this case, Ragozin would have done best to turn his attention to the queenside with 33...♕e7!, winning the pawn on a3.

32...♕e6 33.♖ef1 ♕h3

It was possible to challenge the white pawn centre with 33...c6 34.♕e2 ♖d7, but Ragozin wants to give mate.

34.d5 h6 35.♕e2 ♔h7



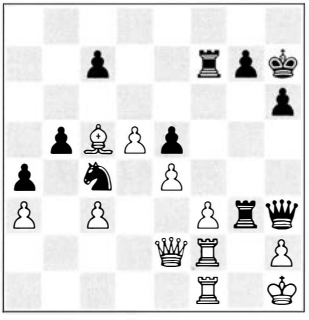
36.♗e3

'White sticks to passive defence. The attempted breakout 36.f4 exf4 37.♗xf4 ♕xc3 38.e5 does not succeed after 38...♕d4! with the threats of ...♖xf4 and ...♕xd5. But after 38.♗xc7, a time-troubled Black would probably not have found it easy to find the only winning moves' – Lipnitsky. After 38.♗xc7, the most precise win is by 38...♖xf2 39.♖xf2 ♕xa3 40.♗g3 ♕c1+.

36...♖f6 37.♗c5 ♖8f7 38.♔h1 ♖f4 39.♔g1 ♖7f6 40.♗e3 ♖g6+ 41.♔h1

'The last seven moves were made in mutual time-trouble. White has maintained the material balance, but almost half of his forces are completely tied up, which gives his opponent the opportunity to carry out a winning manoeuvre easily' – Ragozin.

41...♖f7 42.♗c5 ♖g3!



White is practically in zugzwang, and can only move the bishop (43.♕d1 loses because of 43...♖fxf3! 44.♖xf3 ♕g2#).

43.♗b4 g5 44.♗c5 ♖f4 45.♗e7

The bishop cannot leave the a3 pawn undefended, so it must remove its guard of the square e3. Now the decisive breakthrough follows.

45...g4! 46.fxg4 ♘e3! 47.♖g1

Nor is he saved after 47.♖xf4 exf4 48.e5!? ♘xd5 49.♗f6 (49.♕c2+ ♔h8) 49...♔g8 50.♖d1 f3.

47...♖xf2 48.♕xf2 ♖f3 49.♕h4 ♕f1!



With the deadly threat of 50...♕xg1+! 51.♔xg1 ♖f1#.

50.♕g3 ♖xg3

'It was possible to continue the attack with 50...♕e2 51.♕e1 ♕c4 52.♕b1 ♘xg4, and Black wins. But the text move is the simplest. Black takes play into an easily winning endgame' – Lipnitsky.

51.♖xf1 ♘xf1 52.hxg3 ♘xg3+ 53.♔g2 ♘xe4 54.♗d8 ♘xc3 55.♗xc7 ♘xd5 56.♗xe5 ♘e3+ 57.♔f3 ♘c4

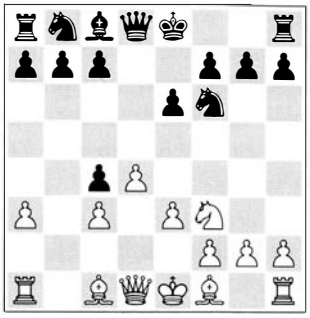
The knight proves extremely gluttonous, and takes another pawn.

58.♗f6 ♘xa3 59.♔e4 ♔g6 60.♗h8 b4 61.♔d4 b3 62.♔c3 ♘c2 63.♔b2 ♘e3 64.♔a3 ♘c4+

White resigned.

Game 46
Petrosian,Tigran
Karaklajic,Nikola
Leningrad 1957

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.d4 ♗b4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3



This general strengthening move has never become very popular, as it poses Black too few problems and is objectively weaker than 7.♕a4+. White's idea is clear – he wants to take on c4 with the bishop, but Black can simply defend the pawn, at the same time preparing for his bishop a space on the long diagonal.

7...b5

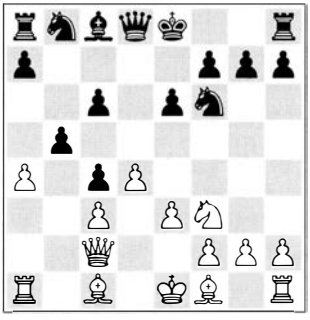
The entry of the queen into the centre by **7...♕d5** looks premature, in view of the typical manoeuvre **8.♘d2**. White not only attacks the c4 pawn, but also prepares to seize the centre with f3 and e4, whilst after 8...b5 there follows the manoeuvre ♗f1-e2-f3. The game could continue **8...♘c6 9.f3** Weaker is 9.♘xc4 e5⇄. **9...♘a5 10.♕a4+ ♗d7 11.♕b4 ♖c8 12.e4 ♕h5 13.e5 ♘c6 14.♕xc4 ♘d5 15.♘e4±**.

The immediate central strike in the style of the Nimzo-Indian with **7...c5** leaves White some opening initiative: **8.♗xc4 ♕c7 9.♕e2 0-0** 9...b6 10.0-0 ♗b7 11.♘d2 ♘c6 12.dxc5!? – an interesting positional decision: White surrenders his beautiful pawn centre and obtains a symmetrical structure, but thanks to his two bishops, it may be that he can count on a small advantage – 12...bxc5 13.e4 0-0 (Mikenas-Sokolsky, Leningrad 1947) 14.♘b3 ♘e5 15.♗f4±. **10.0-0 ♘c6 11.e4 e5 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♗f4 ♘xf3+ 14.♕xf3 ♕c6 15.♗d5 ♘xd5 16.exd5 ♕f6 17.♖fe1±** Erdös-P. Horvath, Budapest 2002.

8.a4

'Played just in time, else Black plays ...♗c8-b7 and avoids having to weaken the square d6, answering ...a7-a6 after a3-a4' – Petrosian.

8...c6 9.♕c2



'White's strategic plan is simple. He wishes to advance the pawn to e5 and transfer the knight to e4' – Petrosian.

Note that Petrosian could prevent his opponent castling kingside, by playing **9.♗a3**, but he does not do so. Why? Evidently, because he would be happy to see the enemy king on g8, since in this case, White can organise an attack on the kingside.

9...♘bd7 10.e4 ♗b7

It is impossible to prevent the advance e4-e5, since after **10...e5?** there follows 11.dxe5 ♘g4 12.♘d4, and the black pawn barrier on the queenside collapses.

11.e5 ♘d5 12.♘g5

'The cavalry raid is too direct and fails to the energetic counterattack from the

better-developed opponent. White should play 12.♗e2' – Petrosian.



Clearly, White has not managed to obtain an opening advantage, and now the question is whether or not he has sufficient compensation for the pawn.

12...♕a5! 13.♗b2

From this square, the bishop not only defends the pawn, but also the rook, thanks to which he threatens to take on b5. Weaker is **13.♗d2**, since in this case Black has not only Petrosian's **13...h6 14.♘e4 0-0** with the unpleasant threat of ...f7-f6, but also the sharper attempt at counterplay **13...c5!? 14.♖b1 cxd4**, e.g. 15.♖xb5 ♕c7 16.cxd4 c3 17.♗c1 ♗c6 18.♖b1 h6 19.♘e4 0-0 20.♘xc3 ♗xa4 21.♕xa4 ♘xc3 22.♕c2 ♖fc8∓.

13...b4

'The battle shifts to the area of the board where Black is stronger' – Petrosian.

14.♗xc4 bxc3

The strongest. Less convincing is 14...♘7b6 15.♗xd5 ♕xd5 16.f3 b3 17.♕d1 ♗a6 18.♘e4 0-0⇄, whilst after 14...♘xc3 15.♗xc3 bxc3 16.O-O± the advantage transfers to White.

15.♗a3 ♘7b6

Black's king is weak, so he needs to play very carefully. Thus, the positionally desirable exchange of light-squared bishops could turn out to have unpleasant consequences: 15...♗a6?! 16.♘e4! ♘7b6 (bad is 16...♗xc4? 17.♘d6+) 17.♘d6+ ♔d7 18.♗xa6 ♕xa6 19.a5 ♘c8 (19...♘c4 20.♕e2?) 20.♘xf7 ♖g8 21.♘g5±.

16.♗e2 ♕xa4 17.♕xa4 ♘xa4



'White is two pawns down, but he is happy to exchange queens. The threat of a knight coming to d6 hangs over Black like the Sword of Damocles, and significantly limits his possibilities. It should be noted, however, that White does not hurry with this transfer, since the knight occupies a strong position on g5' – Petrosian.

18.0-0 ♘ab6?!

More accurate is 18...a5!, in order to meet 19.♖fb1 with 19...♘ab6, and 19.♘e4 with 19...♗a6.

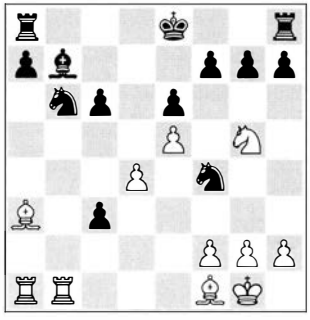
19.♖fb1?!

White could equalise the chances with 19.♘e4! ♔d7 20.♖fc1 a5 21.♗c5 ♗a6 22.♗xb6 ♗xe2 23.♗xa5, winning the c3 pawn and establishing material equality.

19...♘f4?

Black departs from the correct path. The energetic continuation 19...a5! 20.♗c5 ♗a6! would allow him to take the initiative.

20.♗f1



20...f5?

'It turns out that Black's correct 18th move was associated with the wrong plan. This attempt to stop the white knight getting to e4 does not succeed, and a new weakness appears in Black's position, i.e. the pawn on f6. Black was too worried about his opponent's threat and under-estimated his own resources' – Petrosian.

21.exf6 gxf6 22.♘e4 0-0-0

In the blink of an eye, everything has changed, and it is already hard to advise Black. Thus, in the variation 22...♗c8 23.♘xf6+ ♔f7 24.♘e4 ♘bd5 25.♖c1 his position resembles a sieve.

23.♗c5!

'Secures White a clear advantage. With his next move, he will win the pawn on a7 or f6. The pawn on c3 is also doomed. White thus has the pleasant prospect of recovering his sacrificed pawns, whilst retaining all the advantages of his position' – Petrosian.

Tigran Vartanovich is true to himself: he plays to restrict the opponent's possibilities to the maximum extent. By means of 23.♗e7!? ♖xd4 24.♗xf6 White could win the exchange, but after 24...c2 25.♖e1 c5! the situation becomes noticeably sharper.



23...♔b8 24.♘xf6 ♘fd5 25.♘e4 ♖hg8 26.g3 ♖ge8 27.♗d6+ ♔a8 28.♖c1

The problem-like attempt to mate with a double rook sacrifice by 28.♖xa7+ ♔xa7 29.♖a1+ ♗a6? 30.♖xa6+! ♔b7 31.♘c5+ ♔c8 32.♖a8+! ♘xa8 33.♗a6# fails to the defence 29...♘a4.

28...♘d7 29.♖a3

One feels that Petrosian very much wanted to find some sort of crushing blow, else he would have simply taken the pawn on c3.

29...♘7b6 30.♖ca1 ♘c8 31.♗e5 ♖d7 32.♗g2

'There is no particular need for this, or the next move, of course, but White has no need to hurry' – Petrosian.

32...h5 33.h4 ♖f8 34.♘xc3

No blow has been found, and White decides that it is time to re-establish material equality.

34...♘db6 35.♗f1 ♖df7 36.♘e4 ♘d7 37.♗d6



One feels the hand of an experienced blitz player – with one's flag hanging, one always likes to take something, and so Petrosian 'helps' his opponent to commit the decisive mistake.

37...♘xd6?

The idea worked!

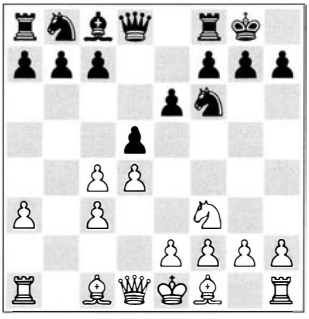
38.♘xd6

In this hopeless position, Black lost on time. The rook on f7 is hanging and there is also a threat of 39.♖xa7+ and 40.♖xb7#.

Game 47
Azizian,Stepan
Lempert,Igor
Yerevan 1996

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 0-0

Statistically, the most popular continuation. Admittedly, in more than half of the cases it leads to some form of Nimzo-Indian, and we will not look at these lines. It is also very easy to end up in territory from the systems 5.♗g5 or 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5, which will be examined in the last two chapters.



7.♗g5

The move **7.e3** leads to one of the tabiyas of the Rubinstein system of the Nimzo-Indian Defence. If you wish to play the line with 6...0-0 as Black, then you will need to study this line independently.

7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗g5 c5 9.e3 ♕a5!? A perfectly possible continuation, although 9...h6 or 9...♘bd7 look more solid. **10.♗xf6** White has no great choice; thus, after 10.♕c2?! ♗f5 11.♕b2 ♘e4 Black takes the initiative. **10...♕xc3+ 11.♘d2 gxf6 12.♖c1 ♕xa3 13.♖xc5 ♘a6⇄** Golichenko-Kravtsiv, Wroclaw 2010.

7...c5 8.e3 ♘bd7

Black can include the moves **8...h6 9.♗h4** and only now play **9...♘bd7**. On the one hand, he gives his king *luft*, but on the other, the bishop is less stable on g5, where it can be attacked by the knight from e4 and the queen at a5. **10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗e2** The bishop is less well-placed on d3, because after 11.♗d3 ♕a5 12.♕c2 cxd4 he has to take the pawn with the

knight, in order not to come under a rook check at e8. Possible then is: 13.♘xd4 ♘e4 14.0-0 ♘dc5 15.♗xe4 dxe4 16.♗e7 ♖e8 17.♗xc5 ♕xc5 18.♖fb1 b6∓ Correa-Van Riemsdijk, Sao Paulo 1989. **11...♕a5 12.0-0** (Sasikiran-Juswanto, Jakarta 2001) **12...♘e4!? 13.c4 ♘c3 14.♕d2 ♘xe2+ 15.♕xe2 b6⇄**.

9.♗d3

A Spanish amateur fell into a typical trap against a Georgian grandmaster: **9.♕c2** ♕a5 10.♘d2 cxd4 11.cxd4 b6 12.♗d3?? (White forgets about his queen's bishop, which he should move – 12.♗f4⇄)

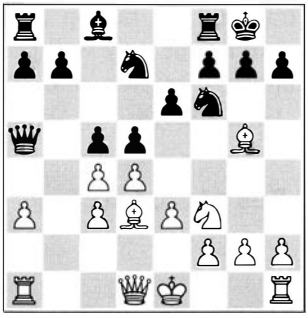


Analysis diagram

12...dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♕xg5, and White resigned, Bedoya-Gelashvili, Balaguer 2007.

Here are a couple of examples of the exchange in the centre: **9.cxd5 exd5 10.♕a4** 10.♗xf6 ♘xf6 11.♘d2 ♗f5 12.♕b3 ♕a5 13.dxc5 ♖fc8 14.♕b4 ♕xc5 15.♕xc5 ♖xc5 16.c4 dxc4 17.♘xc4 ♖ac8∓ Jovicevic-Pejic, Budva 1996; after 10.♕c2 ♕a5 we reach a popular *tabiya* of the Westphalia Variation, examined in Chapter Seven. **10...♕b6 11.♗d3 c4 12.♖b1 ♕e6 13.♗c2 ♘e4∓** Zhu Chen-N.Kosintseva, Krasnoturinsk 2006.

9...♕a5



We have reached a standard Ragozin situation: exploiting his slight lead in development and the absence of the opponent's queen's bishop from the queenside, Black starts an immediate attack on the c3 pawn.

10.♕c2

An accurate move, but it is possibly better not to defend this pawn, but instead to get the king away from the centre as quickly as possible: **10.0-0!?** dxc4 11.♗xc4 ♕xc3 12.♖c1 ♕xa3 13.dxc5 ♕a5 14.♕d4 h6 15.♗h4 ♖e8 16.♗b3 – White has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn, Gunina-Alexandrov, Moscow 2007.

10...dxc4 11.♗xc4 cxd4 12.exd4

White cannot take on d4 with the c-pawn, and it is hard for him to count on any advantage with the c3-d4 pawn couple, because these pawns are quite vulnerable.

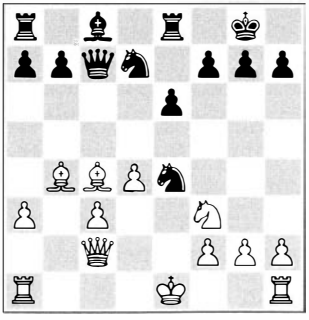
12...♘e4

Also worth considering was **12...b6**, so as to exchange light-squared bishops, e.g. 13.♗d2 ♗a6 14.♗d3 ♗xd3 15.♕xd3 ♖ac8 16.0-0 ♖fd8 17.♕e2 ♕d5∓ Ntiloudi-Georgiadis, Olympus Riviera 2006.

13.♗e7

White transfers his bishop to b4, but there it will not be very well posted. In my opinion, simpler was 13.♗d2 ♘xd2 14.♘xd2 ♕c7 15.♗d3 h6 16.0-0 b6⇄.

13...♖e8 14.♗b4 ♕c7



The bishop on c4 is hanging and also ...a7-a5 is threatened.

15.♕xe4?

White wrongly gives up the light-squared bishop; it was possible to defend against both threats without such a serious positional concession: 15.♗d3 ♘ef6 16.♘g5 g6 17.a4 ♘d5 18.♖c1⇄.

15...♕xc4 16.♘d2 ♕c7 17.c4 e5!

The white king is caught in the centre and this must be exploited.

18.d5 a5 19.♗c3 ♘f6 20.♕h4?

White could still preserve material equality, but in the variation 20.♕f3 e4 21.♕g3 ♕xg3 he must notice the move 22.fxg3! (bad is 22.hxg3? e3∓ with a very strong initiative for Black) 22...e3 23.♘f3⇄.

20...♘xd5 21.♗b2 ♘f4 22.0-0 ♕c6

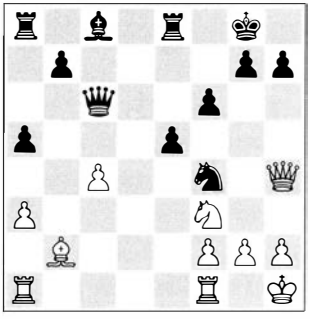
An attack with opposite-coloured bishops often develops of its own accord.

23.♘f3 f6

The immediate 23...♗h3! was also possible.

24.♔h1

The opponent's task could have been complicated somewhat by 24.♗c1. Now it all ends immediately.



24...♗h3! 25.♖g1 ♗xg2+

White resigned.

Chapter Six

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♗g5



The fight for the centre continues. Both sides pin the opposing knights, which control the important central square e4. The main feature of this variation is that both sides have a wide range of possibilities on nearly every move, and the most varied pawn structures can arise here. For example, in the diagram position, Black can immediately prod the bishop (5...h6), continue development (5...♘bd7 or 5...0-0) or take the gambit pawn (5...dxc4). Admittedly, we will not look at the last plan, because the positions arising after 6.e4, the famous Vienna Variation, is another subject and deserves a separate publication. In his turn, White is far from being forced to follow a single line of play. The reader will be able to convince himself of this; in the confines of this one chapter, he will see a sharp gambit line and a tough endgame, with slightly the better prospects for White.

Of course, it is nice to have the Vienna Variation in one's arsenal, but unfortunately, not many of us can have such outstanding opening preparation as someone such as Vladimir Kramnik. In the much quieter variation 5...h6 6.♗xf6 (6.♗h4!? dxc4 is the very sharp gambit we have already spoken about) 6...♕xf6 7.♕b3 c5 Black should gradually achieve equality.

To finish this short introduction, I would point out that play often reaches positions which are looked at in the final, seventh chapter (the system 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5).

Game 48
Gelfand,Boris
Piket,Jeroen
New Delhi 2000

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♗g5 h6

The very sharp Vienna Variation, arising after **5...dxc4 6.e4**, deserves a separate book and will not be examined here.

In our day, the great majority of games appearing under 'D38', go into the Westphalia Variation: **5...♘bd7 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e3 c5** I fear that if I try to pass by this in silence, the reader will not forgive me, so the Westphalia is covered in Chapter Seven.

6.♗xf6

The gambit line **6.♗h4** has achieved a definite popularity of late, the essence of which was defined very precisely by Lipnitsky: 'Black keeps an extra pawn, but this very fact should increase his vigilance, since White tries to muddy the waters.'



Analysis diagram

6...dxc4 Black takes up the gauntlet and tries in his turn for great complications. The most precise (though much less interesting!) path to equality consists in the immediate attack on the knight on c3: 6...g5 7.♗g3 ♘e4. Possible then is: 8.♕c2 (8.♖c1 ♘c6 9.♘e5 ♘xe5 10.♗xe5 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 f6 12.f3 fxe5 13.fxe4 dxe4 14.e3 ♕e7⇄ Schnabel-Postojev, Schwäbisch Gmünd 2010; 8.♕b3 ♘c6 9.e3 h5 10.h4 g4 11.♘e5 (Van Wely-Vallejo Pons, Monaco 2006 (rapid)) 11...♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♘xg3 13.fxg3 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 c6∓. 8...h5 9.h4 g4 10.♘e5 ♘xg3 11.fxg3 c6 12.e4 ♘d7 13.exd5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♕a5⇄ (Naumkin-Vl. Kovacevic, Belgrade 1988).

A) The Vienna Variation is not possible here, since after **7.e4? g5** White loses the e-pawn, whilst the knight sacrifice does not promise White much: 8.♘xg5 hxg5 9.♗xg5 ♖g8 10.♗h4 (Baumann-Schellenberger, Alzey 1997) 10...c5 11.e5 ♕a5 12.♗xf6 ♘c6−+;

B) As usual, one can include the check on a4: **7.♕a4+ ♘c6**. In this position, White has quite a wide choice:



Analysis diagram

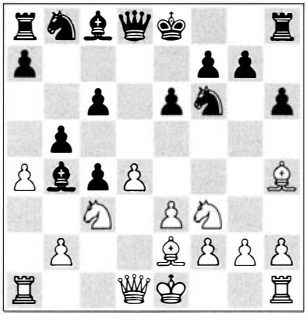
B1) Harmless is **8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.a3** The attempt to exploit the pin on the knight on c6 only loses precious time: 9.♘e5?! ♗d7 10.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ (it is even better to keep the bishop: 10...a5! 11.♕b5 ♗xc6 12.♕xc4 ♖d8∓) 11.bxc3 ♗xc6 12.♕xc4 0-0-0 13.♕c5 ♔b8 14.e3 ♖d5 15.♕c4 ♖f5∓ Rmus-

Delchev, Bijelo Polje 2005. **9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 0-0 11.♕xc4 e5** Both sides have realised their intentions: White has won back the pawn, whilst Black has carried out the planned break ...e6-e5 and brought his light-squared bishop to life. 12.e3 exd4 13.cxd4 ♗e6 14.♕c5 ♖ad8 15.♗e2 ♗d5 16.0-0 ♖fe8⇄ Karpov-Tal, Brussels 1987;

B2) **8.e3 ♗d7** By creating the threat of 9...♘xd4, Black forces the enemy queen to return to her own camp. Also not bad is 8...♕d5 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 b5 12.♕c2 ♗b7 13.e4 ♕h5 14.♗e2 ♘a5 15.♘d2 ♕g6⇄ Dzindzichashvili-Taimanov, USSR 1974. **9.♕c2 b5 10.a3 ♗a5 11.♗e2 ♘e7!?** The aim of this manoeuvre is to unpin the knight on f6, and also to prepare the break ...c7-c5. **12.0-0 ♘g6 13.♗g3?!** 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.♘d2⩲. **13...0-0 14.♘h4** (Laylo-Battulga, Al Ain 2008) **14...♘e7∓**;

B3) **8.a3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♕d5** Black has retained the extra pawn and prepared ...b7-b5 followed by an exchange of bishops on the long diagonal. **10.♗xf6** 10.♘d2 b5 11.♕c2 ♗b7 12.e4 ♘xd4!? 13.cxd4 ♘xe4 14.♕xe4 ♕xe4+ 15.♘xe4 ♗xe4 16.f3 ♗d5⇄ V.Popov-Ibragimov, St. Petersburg 1998. **10...gxf6 11.♘d2 b5 12.♕d1 ♖b8 13.e4 ♕d6 14.a4 a6 15.axb5 axb5 16.♖b1 ♖b6 17.♕h5 e5 18.♗e2 f5∓** M.Gurevich-Bareev, Elista 1998;

C) **7.e3 b5 8.a4** It is hard to manage without this move, although it can be postponed a short while: 8.♗e2 ♘bd7 9.0-0 a6 10.a4 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♗b7 12.♕b1 g5 13.♗g3 ♘e4 14.♖c1 ♖b8⇄ Kolev-V.Georgiev, Sunny Beach 2006. **8...c6 9.♗e2** 9.♘d2 ♗b7 10.axb5 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 cxb5 12.♕b1 ♕b6 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.♖a2 ♘d7 15.♗xc4 ♗xg2 16.♖g1 bxc4 17.♖xg2 ♕xb1+ 18.♘xb1 ♔e7 – White has regained the sacrificed pawn, after which the chances are equal, Gareev-I.Novikov, Calvia 2004; 9.axb5 cxb5 10.♘d2 ♕b6 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.♕f3 ♗b7 13.♕xf6 ♖h7 14.♗e2 ♘d7⇄ (Lesiège-Fridman, Bermuda 1998):



C1) **9...♗b7 10.0-0 a6** 10...♕b6 11.♘e5 ♘bd7 12.f4 (exploiting a convenient moment, White entrenches the knight on e5) 12...a6 13.♗h5 g6= Jianu-Landa, Dresden 2007. **11.♘e5 ♘bd7** 11...♗e7 12.♗f3 ♕b6 13.♕e2 g5 14.♗g3 ♘bd7 (Taboas-Drozdovsky, Ourense 2009) 15.a5! ♕a7 16.♗xc6 ♗xc6 17.♘xc6 ♕b7 18.♘xe7 ♔xe7 19.e4 b4 20.e5±. **12.f4 ♕b6 13.♔h1 ♖d8 14.♕e1 ♗e7⇄** Capo-Mitkov, Morelia 2007;

C2) In my opinion, a more accurate move-order is that demonstrated by Paul Keres in the middle of the last century: **9...♘bd7 10.0-0 ♕b6** Black first covers the e5-square, then defends the b5 pawn, and only then will develop the bishop. **11.e4 ♗b7 12.♕c2 a6 13.♖ad1 c5 14.d5 ♗xc3 15.♕xc3** (Spassky-Keres, Moscow 1955) **15...exd5 16.exd5 0-0∓**.

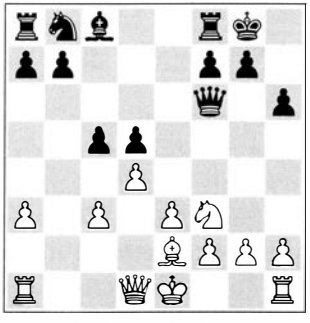
Back to the game.

6...♕xf6



7.e3

Let us look at the alternative **7.a3**. 'We have seen this move in all systems of the Ragozin Defence. Here, as in other lines, Black easily equalises' – Lipnitsky. **7...♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 0-0 9.e3 c5 10.cxd5** 10.♗e2 dxc4 11.♗xc4 ♘c6 12.0-0 e5 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♕xe5 15.♕d5 ♕c7 16.♕h5 ♗d7 17.♖fd1 ♗a4 18.♖d5 b6⇄ Czerwonski-Shirov, Warsaw 2008; 10.♕b3 ♖d8 11.♗e2 dxc4 12.♕xc4 b6 13.♕a4 ♗b7 14.0-0 ♘d7 15.♖fd1 a6 16.♕b3 ♖ac8⇄ Beliavsky-Serper, Novosibirsk 1993. **10...exd5 11.♗e2**



Analysis diagram

Black has no problems, either with his development or in the centre, whilst his opponent does not even have the traditional advantage of the bishop pair. Not surprisingly, several set-ups immediately give Black good play:

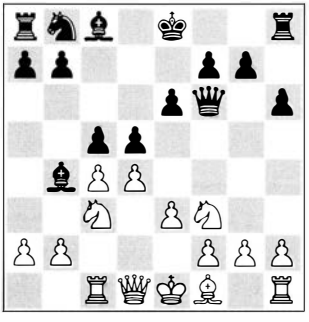
A) The plan with an immediate pawn attack on the queenside is very attractive: **11...c4!?** 12.0-0 ♗f5 13.♘d2 ♕c6! (a move with multiple plans: from this square, the queen supports its pawns and prevents the break e3-e4; in addition, the f6-square is freed for the knight) 14.f3 ♘d7 15.e4 dxe4 16.fxe4 ♗xe4 17.♘xe4 ♕xe4 18.♗xc4 ♕e3+ 19.♔h1 ♕xc3∓ Kibalnichenko-Paschaian, Podolsk 1993;

B) **11...♗e6** 12.0-0 ♘d7 13.a4 ♖fc8 14.♗b5 ♕e7 15.♗xd7 ♕xd7 16.♘e5 ♕e7 17.♘d3 b6⇄ Larsen-Olafsson, Geneva 1977;

C) **11...♘c6** 12.0-0 ♗e6 13.♕a4 ♕e7 14.♖fd1 ♖ac8 15.♖ab1 ♖c7 16.♗b5 ♗f5 17.♖b2 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♖fc8⇄ Torre-Tal, Brussels 1987.

7...0-0

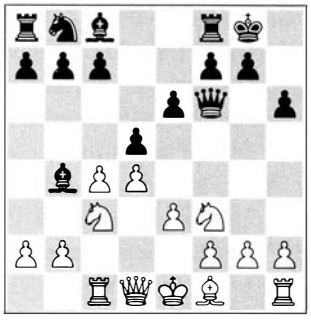
Also possible is **7...c5 8.♖c1**...



and here after 8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 0-0 we have transposed into a position from the game. Weaker is **8...cxd4?!** because of **9.♘xd4!** with the threat of 10.♕a4+. Harmless is 9.♕a4+ ♘c6 10.♘xd4 0-0 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ 13.♖xc3 bxc6 14.♗e2 ♖b8 15.♕c2 ♗f5 16.♕d2 ♖fd8 17.0-0 d4 18.exd4∓ draw, Torre-Rodriguez

Vargas, New York 1988. There could follow: **9...♘c6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗b5 0-0 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.a3 ♗a5 14.0-0±** Greenfeld-Sosonko, Mariehamn 1997.

8.♖c1



Another opening tabiya, formally coming under the index D38, although in spirit it is closer to the Nimzo-Indian or Queen's Gambit. Here, many different pawn structures can arise in the centre: the Carlsbad, the IQP for White (as in this game), the IQP for Black, hanging pawns on c3 and d4, or c6/d5, or the c- and d-pawns of both sides can end up disappearing from the board.

8...dxc4

Here, Black has a wide choice of continuations, giving him adequate play. So as not to drown in a sea of unnecessary variations, we will look at only a few examples:

A) **8...♘c6** 9.cxd5 exd5 10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.♖xc3 ♕g6 12.g3 ♘e7 13.♗g2 c6 14.0-0 ♘f5 15.♕b1 ♕f6 16.b4 ♘d6⇄ Grabowski-Rotstein, Naleczow 1989;

B) **8...♖d8** 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.♖xc3 ♘c6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♗e2 ♘e7 13.♘e5 c6 14.♗g4 ♗xg4 15.♕xg4 ♘f5 16.0-0 ♘d6 17.♖fc1 a5 draw, Benjamin-Rohde, New York 1992;

C) **8...♘d7** 9.cxd5 exd5 10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.♖xc3 c6 12.♗d3 ♘b6 13.♕c2 ♗e6 14.0-0 ♘c8 15.♘e5 ♘d6 16.b4 ♖fc8 17.♖c1 a6 18.a4 a5 19.♕b1 ♕d8⇄ Vazquez-Rizouk, Sevilla 2010.

9.♗xc4 c5 10.0-0 cxd4



11.exd4

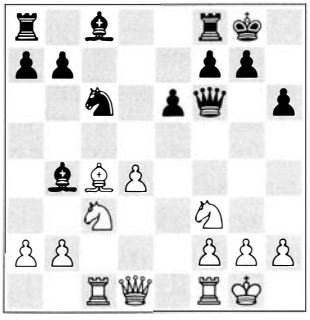
Here, the recapture with the knight is not without its poison: **11.♘xd4 ♗d7 12.♘e4!?** Exploiting his lead in development, White wants to create pressure on the queenside. It looks fairly harmless to play 12.♕b3 ♘c6! 13.♘xc6 (13.♘ce2 ♕e7 14.♘xc6 ♗xc6 15.♘d4 ♖ac8 16.♘xc6 ♖xc6 17.♗d3 ♖fc8= Karpov-Giorgadze, Cala Galdana 2001) 13...♗xc3 14.♘xa7 (14.♖xc3 ♗xc6 15.♗b5 ♗d5 (draw, Roiz-Adams, Gibraltar 2007) 16.♗c4) 14...♗xb2 15.♖cd1 ♗e8 16.♕xb7 ♗a4 17.♗b3 ♖fb8 18.♕c7 ♗e5 19.♕c5 ♗xb3 20.axb3 ♖xb3 21.♘c6 draw, S.Ivanov-Matros, Stockholm 1999/00. **12...♕e7 13.♗e2 ♘c6** Worthy of attention is 13...e5!? 14.♘f3 ♗f5 15.♘g3 ♗h7 16.a3 – White retains a slight initiative, but Black is close to equalising. **14.a3 ♘xd4** 14...♗a5!? 15.♘b3 ♗c7 16.♘bc5 ♗c8 17.♕c2±. **15.♕xd4 ♗a5 16.♕c5! ♗d8 17.♕xe7 ♗xe7 18.♖c7 ♗c6 19.♖xe7 ♗xe4 20.♗f3**

♗c6 21.♗xc6 bxc6 22.♖c1± – Black has a very unpleasant endgame, although it is probably still possible to save it, Milov-I. Farago, Deizisau 2003.

11...♘c6

We have reached a standard IQP position. Black's main task is to develop his queenside pieces. White will use this time to strengthen his pressure in the centre and on one of the flanks, as much as possible.

Possibly Black does best to exchange a pair of pieces: **11...♗xc3!?** 12.♖xc3 ♘c6 13.♖e1 ♖d8 14.♖e4 ♗d7 15.♖ce3 ♖ac8 16.g3 ♘e7 17.♘e5 ♘f5 18.♖d3 ♗c6⇄ Lautier-Renet, France 2003.



12.♘e4!

As the side with the IQP, White wishes to retain as many pieces as possible, and the knight has excellent prospects on the square c5.

12...♕f4

It is obvious that the queen will not be able to remain in this active position for long, but Black wants to provoke the move g2-g3. Admittedly, it will not be easy to exploit the weakened light squares on the kingside, since for this his bishop will need to come to the long diagonal, which is very difficult. In general, finding a good post for this bishop will be Black's main problem in the near future.

Black also has problems after **12...♕e7**, e.g.: **13.♕e2** The queen move to c2 gives White a slight initiative. His idea is, after the transfer of the knight to c5, to play d4-d5, strengthening the pressure on the queenside and at the same time, avoiding the exchange of queens on the e-file. Play could continue: 13.♕c2 ♖d8 14.♖fd1 ♗d7 15.a3 ♗a5 16.b4 ♗b6 17.♘c5 ♗e8 18.d5 exd5 19.♗xd5 a5 (Aronian-Kramnik, Moscow 2009) 20.♖e1 ♕f6 21.♕e4±. **13...♖d8 14.♖fd1 ♗d7 15.a3 ♗a5 16.b4 ♗b6 17.♘c5 ♗e8 18.♕e4 a5 19.♖b1 axb4 20.axb4**



Analysis diagram

Here Black decided to change the pattern of things, but it was quite wrong to allow the enemy rook into his position: **20...♘xb4?!** 20...♖a3!?. **21.♖xb4 ♗xc5 22.♖xb7 ♕d6 23.♗d3 f5 24.♕e2±** Cifuentes Parada-Rodriguez Gonzalez, San Sebastian 2003.

13.♕e2 ♖d8 14.g3

The queen needs to be driven from f4, since she stands too well there. White wants to place his own queen on e3, in order to reinforce the central pawn and

from where it can, as necessary, transfer to either wing.

14...♕g4

The queen draws fire upon herself, although the following variation shows that this is a rather risky strategy: **14...♕f5** 15.♖fd1 ♗f8 16.a3 ♗d7 17.♗d3 ♕h5 18.♘c5 ♗xc5 19.♖xc5 ♕g4 20.♔g2 b6 (Cebalo-Dizdar, Slavonski Brod 1995) and here White could have won the queen: 21.♗e4! bxc5 22.h3 ♕xe4 (22...♕h5 23.g4 ♘xd4 24.♖xd4 cxd4 25.gxh5+−) 23.♕xe4 cxd4 24.♘xd4±;
On the other hand, the cautious **14...♕c7** allows White to regroup his forces successfully, retaining an opening initiative: 15.♖fd1 ♗d7 16.a3 ♗f8 17.b4 a6 18.♗a2 ♗e8 19.♗b1± Shulman-Onischuk, San Diego 2006.

15.♖fd1 ♗d7 16.a3 ♗e7

After 16...♗f8 White carries out much the same plan: 17.♕e3 ♗e8 18.b4 ♕h5 19.♗e2 ♕f5 20.♘h4 ♕h7 21.♘c5 g5 22.♘f3 ♖ab8 23.♗c4 ♕g7 24.d5 exd5 25.♗xd5± Magai-Mitkov, Istanbul 2000.

17.♕e3 ♗e8 18.b4!



White seizes space on the queenside and prepares the outpost c5 for his knight. Black can hardly prevent the knight coming to c5 by means of ...b7-b6, because in this case, he seriously weakens his queenside.

18...a6 19.♗e2 ♕h3 20.♘c5 ♗xc5

Of course, it is hard to put up with such a knight. After 20...♖ab8, both 21.♗f1 followed by ♗g2, strengthening the pressure on the queenside, and also 21.♗c4!? with the idea of d4-d5 are possible; after the opening of the centre, the disunity of the black pieces may tell.

21.dxc5



So, the structure changes radically. White gets rid of his isolated pawn and obtains the queenside pawn majority, so prized by Steinitz. Black gets an extra pawn in the centre, it is true, but this is hard to advance.

21...♕f5

The queen has long been missed by her colleagues, and at the first opportunity, she returns home. Obviously, White wants to play ...e6-e5 as soon as possible, to create counterplay in the centre.

22.♗d3 ♕f6 23.♗e4

By transferring the bishop to the long diagonal, White forces the pawn on e6 to stay in its place.

23...♖xd1+

After 23...e5 24.♖e1! ♗d7 25.♗xc6 ♗xc6 26.♘xe5 ♖e8 27.f4 Black has sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

24.♖xd1 ♖c8 25.h4!?

An interesting thought. Tempting was 25.♖d6, trying somehow to strengthen the pressure in the centre, but Gelfand wants to cramp his opponent over the whole board.

25...♔f8 26.g4



Exploiting the opponent's lack of counterplay, White strengthens his position to the maximum. Black, to my mind, should either now, or on the previous move, have played ...♖d8, in order to simplify the position somewhat. But Piket does not feel the full danger of his position.

26...♕e7 27.g5 hxg5 28.hxg5 ♖d8 29.♖e1!

White needs the rook for a direct attack on the enemy king. For example, he can threaten to come down the h-file.

29...♕c7

Black misses a nasty blow, but it is already hard to know what to recommend. For example, after 29...♔g8 30.♔g2 e5 31.♗c2 White wins the e5 pawn at least.

30.g6! fxg6

Nor is he saved by 30...f6 31.♗xc6 ♕xc6 32.♘d4 ♖xd4 (he has to give up the exchange, but he does not manage to set up a fortress) 33.♕xd4 ♔e7 (33...♗xg6 34.♕d6+ ♕xd6 35.cxd6, and the white rook penetrates to c7) 34.♖d1 ♕d7 35.♕xd7+ ♗xd7 36.♖d6, and White wins, by gradually preparing a pawn breakthrough on the queenside.

31.♘g5 ♘d4

An oversight, but after 31...♕e7 32.♗xc6 ♗xc6 33.♘xe6+ Black's position is also hopeless.

32.♕xd4 **1-0**

Game 49
Wang Hao
Zhang Zhong
Beijing 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.♕b3



This move was first seen in the game Bogoljubow-Marshall, Moscow 1925,

and two years later, at the New York super-tournament, Alekhine repeated it against the same opponent. Because of this possibility, Alekhine regarded the whole variation as better for White, but in recent years, Black has found a path to equality. Even so, he can still be posed some definite practical problems.

7...c5

This is how Alekhine assessed this move: 'If this counterattack were correct, one would have to admit that the manoeuvre ♗c1-g5 is insufficient. In reality, though, the double move of the c-pawn gives certain counterchances only after inaccurate play by White... On the contrary, simple liquidation of the central tension assures White a real positional or material advantage.'

Fortunately for Black, this severe assessment has not proved correct.

Instead of the text, the move **7...♗xc3+** is worse: **8.♕xc3** 'Taking with the queen is significantly stronger than 8.bxc3. From c3, the queen prevents Black achieving the central breaks ...c7-c5 or ...e6-e5. Now he threatens to win the pawn on c7' – Lipnitsky. Indeed, White is promised little by 8.bxc3 ♕d8 9.e3 0-0 10.♗e2 ♘c6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♕a3 b6 13.c4 dxc4 14.♗xc4 ♗g4 15.♗e2 a5⇄ Karpov-Vera, Benidorm 2002.



Analysis diagram

8...c6 9.e3 ♘d7 After 9...dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♘d7 11.0-0 Black's position remains cramped, since the attempt to free it by 11...c5?! leads only to new problems after 12.♖fd1!. **10.♗e2** Lipnitsky's recommendation has been undeservedly forgotten: 10.c5! 0-0 11.♗d3 ♖e8 (Tartakower-Vajda, Semmering 1926) 12.♘e5!±. 'An unusual solution to the problem! The blockading ring around the pawn group c6-d5-e6 closes. Black is very cramped, and his bishop on c8 creates an especially sad impression. It is now hard to free him' – Lipnitsky. **10...0-0 11.0-0 b6 12.cxd5 exd5 13.♖ac1 ♗b7 14.♖fd1 a5 15.♘e1 ♕d6⇄** Ribli-Granda Zuniga, Wijk aan Zee 1989.

8.cxd5

Alekhine considered the move **8.dxc5** to be a refutation of the system, but later Black found a good reply: **8...♗xc3+! 9.bxc3** 9.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 10.bxc3 dxc4 11.e3 ♘d7 12.c6 bxc6 13.♗xc4 ♖b8=. **9...dxc4 10.♕xc4** White has won a pawn, but can hardly keep it, as the doubled c-pawns are too vulnerable. **10...0-0 11.e3 ♗d7 12.♗d3 ♗c6 13.0-0 ♘d7 14.♗e2∓** draw, Kortchnoi-Sosonko, Lone Pine 1981.

8...exd5



9.e3

'A quiet continuation. However, Black must be on the alert the whole time, as White's apparent quietness can be very deceptive' – Lipnitsky.

White gets nothing from **9.♖c1** (with the idea of taking on c5, avoiding the doubled c-pawns) because of **9...♘c6! 10.e3** 10.dxc5? d4 winning the pinned knight. **10...c4 11.♕d1 0-0 12.♗e2 ♖d8 13.0-0 ♖b8∓** Black is ready for a queenside pawn offensive, Aratovsky-Bannik, Vilnius 1949.

There is also little offered by **9.dxc5** on account of **9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3** In the endgame after 10.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♘a6 Black is fine – he wins back the c5 pawn and obtains equal chances: 12.e3 ♘xc5 13.♘d4 ♗d7 14.c4 draw, Grathwohl-Steckner, Germany Bundesliga B 1995/96. **10...0-0 11.♘d4** White has an extra pawn, and is attacking another, but Black quietly defends it. **11...♗e6 12.♕a3** It turns out that after 12.♕xb7 ♘d7 Black obtains serious counterplay, thanks to his lead in development, e.g. 13.♕b4 ♖ab8 14.♕a3 ♖fc8 15.e3 ♕g6! (after this precise move, it is not easy for White to get his king out of the centre) 16.♘b3 (this move leads to a forced draw, whilst after 16.f3 ♘xc5 17.♔f2 ♕f6⩲ all three results are possible, Akobian-Mitkov, Chicago 2008) 16...♘xc5! 17.♘xc5 ♖b1+ 18.♖xb1 ♕xb1+ 19.♔d2 ♖xc5! 20.♕xc5 ♕xa2+, and Black gives perpetual check: 21.♔d3 ♕b1+ 22.♔e2 (22.♔d4? ♕e4#) 22...♕c2+ 23.♔f3 ♕f5+ 24.♔e2 (24.♔g3? ♕g4#) 24...♕c2+. **12...♖c8 13.e3 ♘d7 14.c6** The extra pawn cannot be defended, but White at least can close the c-file, in order not to lose the c3 pawn as well. **14...bxc6 15.♗a6 ♖cb8 16.0-0 ♖b6 17.♗e2 ♕g6** Threatening 18...♗h3 19.♗f3 ♘e5, so White decides to simplify further. **18.♘xe6 ♕xe6 19.♖ab1 ♖ab8⇄** Ivanchuk-Mitkov, Yerevan 2001. As usual, Black must reckon with the continuation **9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.♕xc3**.



Analysis diagram

The c5 pawn is hanging, and the best line now is reckoned to be **10...♘d7** In the stem game Bogoljubow-Marshall, Moscow 1925, Black sacrificed a pawn with 10...0-0 11.♕xc5 ♗g4, but after 12.♘e5 ♗e6 13.e3 ♖c8 14.♕b5± his compensation is insufficient, Bagaturov-Alexandrov, Frunze 1989. Worth consideration is 10...b6!? 11.♖c1 ♘d7 12.e3 0-0 13.♗b5 c4 14.b3 a6 15.♗xd7 ♗xd7 16.bxc4 dxc4 17.0-0 b5⇄ Bu Xiangzhi-Drozdovsky, Beijing 2008. **11.e3** The king's fianchetto looks too slow: 11.g3 0-0 12.♗g2 ♖e8 13.0-0 ♖xe2 14.♖ae1 ♖e6 15.♗h3 ♖e4⇄ Vaganian-Alexandrov, Moscow 2002; whilst the endgame is safe for Black after 11.♕e3+ ♕e7 12.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 13.dxc5 ♘xc5 14.♖c1 ♘e6 15.e3 ♖d8 16.♔d2 ♗d7 17.♗d3 ♖ac8 18.b4 ♔d6⇄ Bacrot-Ponomariov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009. **11...0-0 12.♗e2 b6** 12...a6!? 13.0-0 b6 14.b3 ♗b7 15.♖fc1 ♖fc8 16.dxc5 bxc5 17.b4 ♕xc3 18.♖xc3 c4 19.♘d4 g6⇄ Cmilyte-Pashikian, Aix les Bains 2011. **13.0-0 ♗b7 14.♖fc1 c4** Having completed his development, Black begins to

carry out his usual plan of advancing his queenside pawns. **15.a4 a6 16.♕b4 ♗c6 17.b3 b5 18.bxc4 dxc4 19.♘d2 ♘b6⇄** Spraggett-Peralta, Andorra 2007.

Back to the game.



9...0-0

'An example of deep opening play. Since White has not revealed his plans, Black does not commit his knight, keeping the possibility of developing it on d7 or c6' – Lipnitsky.

Indeed, if Black brings out the knight immediately with **9...♘c6**, then there is the unpleasant reply **10.♗b5!** 10.dxc5 ♗e6 is not dangerous, e.g.: 11.♗b5 ♗xc5 12.0-0 0-0 13.♖ac1 ♗d6⇄.



Analysis diagram

10...0-0 In the variation 10...cxd4 11.♘xd4 0-0 12.♗xc6 ♗xc3+ 13.♕xc3 bxc6 14.♕xc6± Black remains a pawn down. **11.dxc5 d4!?** The most tenacious; both 11...♗xc5? 12.♘xd5± and 11...♗xc3+ 12.♕xc3 ♕g6 13.0-0-0± are prospectless. **12.♗xc6 dxc3 13.♕xb4 cxb2 14.♖b1 bxc6** Black opens the path of his bishop to a6, and hopes to prevent his opponent from completing his development. 14...♕xc6 15.0-0±. **15.0-0** The correct reaction – the pawn on b2 is not going anywhere; after 15.♖xb2? ♗a6 16.♘d4 ♖fe8⩱ Black obtains excellent compensation for the pawn, Wojtaszek-Bauer, Pamplona 2006. **15...♗a6** Black is even worse off after 15...♗h3 16.♖xb2 ♖ad8 17.♘d4± Dreev-Alexandrov, Shenyang 2000. **16.♖fe1 ♖ab8 17.♕a3 ♗c4 18.♘d4±** Seirawan-Polgar, Amsterdam 1995.

10.a3

The move **10.dxc5** will be looked at later in the game Kramnik-Khalifman.

10...♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 b6 12.♗e2

White quietly completes his development, correctly reasoning that the pressure on the enemy queenside pawns will give him a small, but lasting advantage.

The move **12.dxc5** will be seen later in the game Kasimdzhanov-Vitiugov.



12...♗e6

Black still has definite problems after **12...♗a6** 13.dxc5! ♕xc3+ 14.bxc3 bxc5 15.♖b1±, and White wins the battle for the b-file, Dias-Prusikin, Evora 2006.

After **12...♘c6** White should also take on c5 at once: **13.dxc5!** Weaker is 13.♗b5, because with this move White closes the b-file, and drives the knight to a better square: 13...♘e7 14.dxc5 ♕xc3+ 15.bxc3 bxc5 16.♔e2 ♗e6 17.♖hb1 ♖fb8⇄ Gajewski-Morozevich, Dresden 2008. **13...♕xc3+ 14.bxc3 bxc5 15.♖b1 ♖b8** 15...♗e6 16.♖b5 c4 17.♔d2±. **16.♖xb8 ♘xb8 17.♔d2±**.

The most serious alternative to the game continuation is **12...♘d7**, e.g. **13.0-0 ♗b7 14.♖fc1** Maybe the most accurate move is 14.b3!?, not allowing the opponent to quietly play ...c5-c4: 14...♖fd8 15.♖fc1 ♖ac8 16.dxc5 ♕xc3 17.♖xc3 ♖xc5 18.♖ac1 ♖dc8 19.♖xc5 bxc5 20.b4 c4 21.♘d4± Roiz-Arutinian, Rijeka 2010. **14...c4** Black has a slightly inferior ending after 14...♖ac8 15.dxc5 ♕xc3 16.♖xc3 ♖xc5 17.♖cc1 ♖fc8 18.♖d1 ♖c2 19.♗b5 ♘f8 20♖ab1 ♖2c7 21.♗a4 ♘e6 22.♗b3±, as seen in Ivanchuk-Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2007. **15.a4 a6 16.♕b4 ♗c6** White tries to prevent the opponent playing ...b6-b5, but Black sticks to his guns. **17.♘d2 b5 18.axb5 axb5 19.b3 ♕g6** Another plan was worth considering: 19...♖fc8 20.h3 ♕d8⇄. **20.♗f3 ♖fb8** with mutual chances, Pelletier-Alexeev, Biel 2008.

13.0-0 ♖c8 14.♖fc1



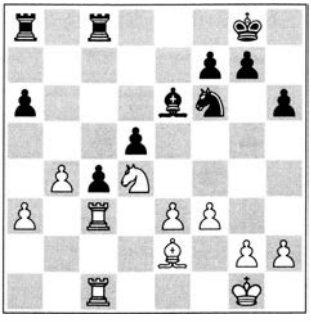
14...a6?!

Black wrongly weakens his pawn structure on the queenside. Stronger was **14...♘d7**, and now 15.♗a6 ♖c7 16.dxc5 bxc5 17.♕a5 is not dangerous for Black because of the simple reply 17...♕d8 18.♘d4 ♖b8 with adequate play.

15.dxc5 ♕xc3 16.♖xc3! bxc5 17.♖ac1 ♘d7 18.b4

This is the whole point: White forces the c-pawn to move forward, after which he creates a blockade on the dark squares.

18...c4 19.♘d4 ♘f6 20.f3



Black has quite an unpleasant position: he has no counterplay and must reckon the whole time with the break e3-e4, destroying his pawn centre.

20...♗d7 21.♔f2

The immediate 21.e4!? deserves attention, but after 21...♗b5! (21...dxe4 22.fxe4 ♘xe4 23.♖xc4± is clearly weaker) 22.e5 ♘e8 23.♘f5 ♔f8 the position is much sharper, and Black has counterchances. Instead of this, White brings his king into the centre.

21...♖cb8 22.♖b1 ♘e8?!

This knight retreat allows White a thematic central break. Correct was 22...♖e8.

23.e4! dxe4 24.♗xc4 exf3 25.gxf3

More accurate was 25.♗d5 ♖a7 26.♗xf3±, immediately transferring the bishop to the long diagonal.

25...♘d6 26.♗d5 ♖a7 27.♖bc1 ♘b5 28.♘xb5 axb5 29.♖c7 ♖xc7 30.♖xc7



Black's position is extremely unpleasant – he has weaknesses on both flanks, whilst he will have no counterplay in the foreseeable future. Even so, his defensive potential should not be underestimated.

30...♗e6

The passive defence 30...♖d8 31.♔e3 ♔f8 is hardly appropriate now. Black's idea is to prevent the enemy king coming to the d-file, but White can do so all the same: 32.♔d4 (maybe it is better first to force a weakening of the black kingside, and then go to the other flank: 32.♔f4!? f6 33.♔e4) 32...♗e6 33.♖c5 ♗xd5 34.♖xd5 ♖a8. This is Black's idea, but after 35.♖xb5 ♖xa3 36.♖e5 ♖xf3 37.b5 ♖b3 38.♔c5 f6 39.♖e4 he may not be able to defend.

31.♗c6?!

The white bishop is more active than its opponent, so he does not want to exchange. Even so, after 31.♗xe6 fxe6 32.♖a7 Black has quite an unpleasant position, since both white pieces are active.

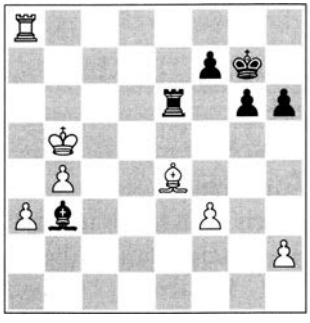
31...♗c4?

Black misses a chance to activate his rook: 31...♖b6! 32.♔e3 ♖a6 with good drawing chances.

32.♗e4 ♗b3 33.♔e3 g6 34.♔d4 ♖b6 35.♔c5 ♖a6

Black has arrived at the same idea, but has lost a load of tempi along the way. But the main thing is that now his rook does not get free.

36.♖c8+! ♔g7 37.♖a8 ♖e6 38.♔xb5



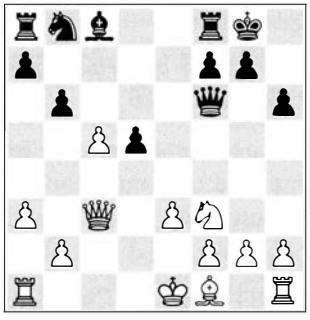
38...f5 39.♗c6 ♗d1 40.♖a7+ ♔f6 41.a4 ♖e2

Black's counterplay is clearly too late. Nor does he save himself by 41...♖e3 42.a5 ♗xf3 43.♗xf3 ♖xf3 44.a6 ♖a3 45.♖a8 ♔g5 46.a7 f4 47.♔b6 f3 48.♖f8.

42.♖d7 ♗b3 43.a5 ♖c2 44.♔b6 ♗e6 45.♖h7 1-0

Game 50
Kasimdzhanov,Rustam
Vitiugov,Nikita
Moscow 2011

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.♕b3 c5 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.♕xc3 b6 11.e3 0-0 12.dxc5



White heads directly into an endgame, in which he hopes to exploit the weakness of the pawns on c5 and d5.

12...♕xc3+ 13.bxc3 bxc5 14.0-0-0

More often, White immediately breaks up the opponent's centre with **14.c4**, after which Black invariably replies **14...♗e6**. Incidentally, the engines show that 14...dxc4! 15.♗xc4 ♘d7 16.♖c1 ♖b8 or 15.♘e5 ♘d7 16.♘xc4 ♖b8 is stronger, with mutual chances. **15.cxd5** Harmless for Black is 15.♖c1 ♖c8 16.cxd5 draw, Dlugy-Dizdar, Saint John 1988, but 15.0-0-0! is possible, transposing into the main game. **15...♗xd5 16.0-0-0 ♗b7!** The correct decision; the bishop should be placed on the long diagonal, exerting pressure on the white kingside. Weaker is 16...♗e6 because of 17.♗b5!, making the development of the knight on b8 more difficult: 17...♖c8 18.♖d6 a6 19.♗a4 ♖a7 20.♖hd1± Ivanchuk-Blatny, Warsaw 1999. **17.♖d6** Worthy of consideration is 17.♗e2 ♘c6 18.♖d7 ♖ab8 19.♖hd1±. **17...♘c6 18.♗a6** In this way, White wins a pawn, but is left with a knight against a bishop, and his king becomes weakened. **18...♗xa6 19.♖xc6 ♗b7 20.♖xc5 ♖ac8 21.♖xc8 ♖xc8+** In this position, the bishop is clearly stronger than the knight, and it is also difficult for White to complete his development, without allowing the enemy rook onto the second rank. **22.♔d2 ♖d8+ 23.♔c3 ♖c8+** draw, V.Popov-Bareev, Kazan 1995.

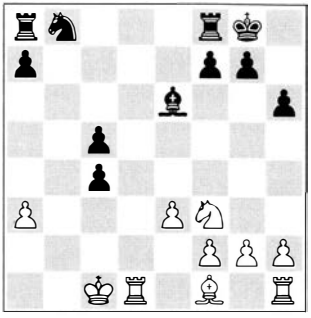
14...♗e6

Black also has at his disposal the interesting pawn sacrifice 14...♗b7 15.c4 d4!? 16.exd4 ♗xf3 17.gxf3 cxd4 18.♖xd4 ♘c6 19.♖d6 ♖fc8 20.♔c2 ♖ab8. At first sight, Black's activity compensates for the small material deficit.

15.c4

Previously seen was 15.♗b5 ♖c8 (15...a6! 16.♗a4 ♖a7⇄) 16.♘e5 c4 17.♖d2 ♖c5 18.♖b2± Vavrak-Zilberstein, ICC 2006.

15...dxc4



16.♘e5!

White not only regains the pawn, but also prevents his opponent developing normally.

16...c3?!

An empty gesture, since this pawn becomes easy prey for the enemy king. Stronger was 16...♖e8 17.♗xc4 ♘c6!, and Black is close to equalising.

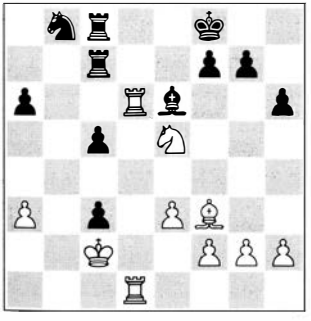
17.♔c2 ♖c8 18.♖d6 ♔f8 19.♗e2 a6

The only way of finishing his development.

20.♖hd1 ♖a7 21.♗f3

A perfectly logical move, but White has some good alternatives: 21.♔xc3 ♔e7 22.♖b6 ♖ac7 23.♖dd6± or 21.♗c4 ♗xc4 22.♘xc4 ♔e7 23.♔xc3±.

21...♖ac7



Black is hanging on, but the next move shows that his defensive lines can be breached.

22.♘g6+! ♔e8 23.♘f4

23.♔xc3 ♖d7 24.♘e5 ♖xd6 25.♖xd6 a5 26.a4± also looks good.

23...♗d7 24.♔xc3 ♗a4

Almost Black's first active move of the game.

25.♖b1 ♖a7 26.♖b7!

After the exchange of one pair of rooks, the pawns on a6 and c5 become more vulnerable.

26...♖xb7 27.♗xb7 ♖c7 28.♗xa6

This capture could have been postponed. It looks even stronger to play 28.♖b6 ♘d7 29.♖xa6 ♖xb7 30.♖xa4±.

28...♗c6



29.♗c4

It was worth considering exchanging a pair of minor pieces by means of the small tactic 29.♗b5!? ♗xb5 30.♖b6 ♗c6 31.♖xb8+ ♔d7 32.♖g8 g5 33.♘d3 ♗xg2 34.h4±.

29...♖a7 30.♔b3 ♔e7 31.♖d2 ♘d7

Black is currently a pawn down, but he has at least driven the enemy rook out of his camp and got his knight into play. In addition, the white king is now tied to the defence of the e3 pawn.

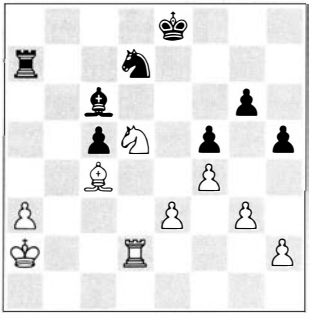
32.♘d5+ ♔e8

Black does not want to exchange his strong bishop, so he must put up with the strong knight on d5.

33.f4

Depriving the opponent of the counterplay associated with ...♘d7-e5.

33...f5 34.g3 g6 35.♖d3 h5 36.♖d2 ♖b7+ 37.♔a2 ♖a7



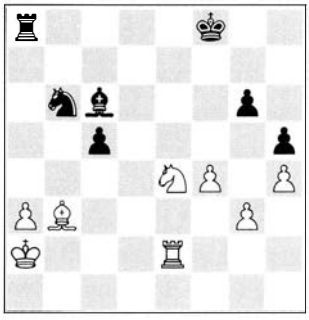
38.♘c3?

This knight retreat allows the black pieces to become active. Instead, White had available a nice trick: 38.♘f6+ ♘xf6 39.♖d6, winning back the piece and getting at the opponent's weak pawns. Admittedly, Black can force a rook ending with 39...♘d5 40.♗xd5 (40.♖xc6? ♘b4+) 40...♗xd5+ 41.♖xd5 ♖a5, but after 42.e4! fxe4 43.♖e5+ ♔f7 44.♖xe4 ♔f6 45.♖e5 White should win.

38...♘b6 39.♗b3 ♔e7 40.h4

White could immediately get rid of the backward pawn: 40.e4 fxe4 41.♖e2 etc.

40...♖a8 41.♖d1 ♖a7 42.♖d2 ♖a8 43.e4 fxe4 44.♖e2 ♔f8 45.♘xe4

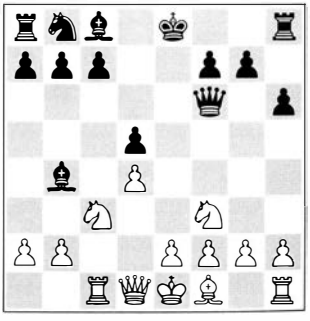


Here, somewhat surprisingly, a draw was agreed. Evidently, the players had in mind the variation 45...c4 46.♗c2 ♘d5 47.♔b2 c3+ 48.♘xc3 ♘xc3 49.♔xc3 ♖xa3+ 50.♔d4 (bad is 50.♗b3? ♗a4 51.♖b2 ♔g7≅) 50...♖xg3 with equal chances.

Game 51
Kramnik,Vladimir
Khalifman,Alexander
Zurich 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♕b3

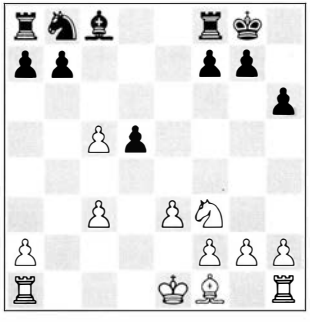
Another plan is associated with the move **8.♖c1**.



Analysis diagram

White wants to force the exchange on c3, take with the rook and create pressure on the queenside. However, practice has shown that the resulting Carlsbad-type positions are not dangerous for Black. This is how the battle could develop: **8...0-0 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.♖xc3 c6 11.e3 a5** Useful prophylaxis against the minority attack; if White now plays b2-b4, then Black opens the a-file and brings the rook on a8 into play. **12.♗e2** 12.♘e5 ♘d7 13.♘xd7 ♗xd7 14.♗d3 ♕g5 15.0-0 ♖fe8 draw, Torre-Tal, San Francisco 1991; 12.♗d3 ♗g4 13.h3 ♗h5 14.g4 ♗g6 15.♘e5 ♗xd3 16.♕xd3 ♕e7 17.♕f5 ♖d8 18.♖g1 ♘d7⇄ Denker-Fischer, New York 1959. **12...♗g4 13.♘e5 ♗xe2 14.♕xe2 ♕e6 15.0-0 ♘d7 16.♘d3 ♖a7 17.♖fc1 a4⇄** Dinstuhl-V.Lazarev, Germany Bundesliga 2006/07.

8...c5 9.e3 0-0 10.dxc5 ♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 12.bxc3



'With regard to a virtually identical position, which could have arisen in the game Botvinnik-Bondarevsky, match-tournament 1941, Botvinnik wrote that Black has great problems regaining the pawn. Indeed, Black lacks the move ...♘b8-a6 because of ♗f1xa6, whilst after ...♘b8-d7 there follows ♖a1-d1, winning the d5 pawn. Even so, Black has two good continuations' – Lipnitsky.

12...♘d7

'It turns out that, despite the approaching endgame, Black is not going to bother regaining the pawn. Instead, he quickly brings his pieces into play and starts attacking the weak white pawns on the queenside' – Lipnitsky.
Lipnitsky considers **12...♗e6** to be the strongest move, but I am not convinced this is correct.



Analysis diagram

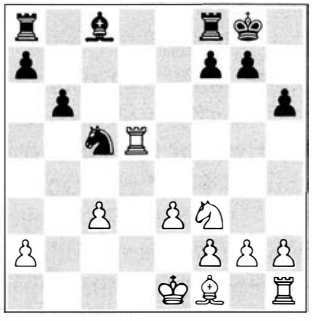
There could follow: **13.♗b5!** with the idea of obtaining a pleasant endgame with good knight against bad bishop. Meanwhile, if Black attacks the bishop with ...a7-a6, then he weakens his queenside in the process. Other continuations do not pose Black particular problems: 13.♘d4 ♖c8 14.♖b1 (14.c4 ♖xc5 15.♘xe6 fxe6 16.cxd5 exd5 17.♗d3 ♘d7 18.♔d2 ♘e5 19.♖hc1 ♘xd3 20.♔xd3 ♖ac8 21.♖xc5 ♖xc5, draw, A.Rychagov-Khairullin, Irkutsk 2010) 14...♘d7 15.c4 (15.c6?! bxc6 16.♗a6 ♖cb8 17.0-0 ♘c5 18.♗e2 ♘e4⇄ N. Gaprindashvili-Dizdar, Dubai 2002) 15...♘xc5 16.♘xe6 fxe6 17.cxd5 exd5 18.♗e2 ♘e4 19.♗g4 ♖c6 20.f3 ♘c5⇄ Tregubov-

Alexandrov, Budva 2002; 13.♖b1 ♘d7 14.♖xb7 ♘xc5 15.♖b5 ♖fc8 16.♘d4 ♗d7 17.♖a5 ♖ab8⇄ Bocharov-Alexandrov, Sochi 2004. **13...♖c8 14.♔d2 ♖xc5 15.♖hb1 ♖c7 16.♘d4 ♘c6 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♖b2 c5 19.♘xe6 fxe6 20.♖ab1 ♔f7 21.♖b7 ♖c8 22.c4±** Vaganian-Goldin, Calvia 2004. This is a position where White can play for two results, but Black has very good drawing chances, of course.

13.♖d1

White can drag the b7 pawn to c6, thereby sparing his c3 pawn from a frontal attack, but in this case, Black also strengthens his own d5 pawn: **13.c6** bxc6 14.♗e2 ♖b8 15.♘d4 ♖b6 16.0-0 ♗a6 17.♗xa6 ♖xa6 18.♖fb1 ♖b8⇄ Beliavsky-Neubauer, Austria 2008/09.

13...♘xc5 14.♖xd5 b6



White has weak pawns on a2 and c3, and is behind in the development of his kingside.

15.♖d4

Practice has also seen **15.c4** ♗a6 (15...♗b7 16.♖d4 ♗xf3 17.gxf3 ♖ad8 18.♔d2 ♘e6 (Malakhov-Delchev, Istanbul 2003) 19.♖d5 ♘c7 20.♖d3±) 16.♘d4 ♖fc8 17.f3 ♘b7 18.♘b5 draw, Khenkin-Alexandrov, Herceg Novi 2001.

15...♗e6

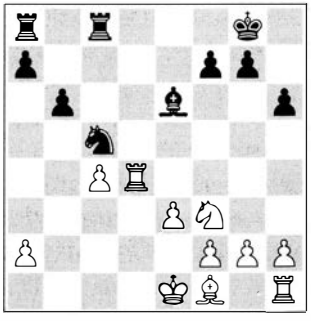
This move forces White to solve concrete problems. Less resolute is **15...♗b7** 16.♗c4 ♖ac8 17.0-0 ♖c7 (17...♘e6 18.♖h4 ♖c7⇄) 18.♖fd1 ♘e6 19.♗xe6 fxe6 20.♖d7 ♖xd7 21.♖xd7 ♖f7 22.♖xf7 ♔xf7 23.♔f1± Grivas-Ehlvest, Panormo 2002.

16.c4

The exchange of bishops helps Black create counterplay on the c-file: **16.♗c4** ♗xc4 17.♖xc4 ♖fc8 18.♘d2 (18.♖d4 ♘e6 19.♖d3 ♖c4 20.♘d4 ♘c5 21.♖d2 ♘e4 22.♖b2 ♘xc3∓ Padevsky-Langeweg, Amsterdam 1972) 18...b5 19.♖d4 ♘e6 20.♖d3 ♘c5 21.♖d5 ♘a4 22.♖xb5 ♘xc3 23.♖b2 ♘xa2! 24.0-0 ♘c3 25.♖a1 a5 26.g3 draw, Khenkin-Landa, Germany Bundesliga 2004/05.

16...♖fc8

He can also bring the other rook to c8: **16...♖ac8** 17.♗e2 ♘a4 18.♔d2 ♖c5 19.♖b1 ♖fc8 20.♖b4 ♖a5 21.♘e1 ♘c5 22.♖b2 ♖a4 23.♘c2 ♘b7 24.♘b4 draw, Malich-Langeweg, Amsterdam 1972.



17.g4!

A very interesting idea: White opens a second front on the kingside, at the same time deflecting the opponent from attacking the weak pawns on the queenside.

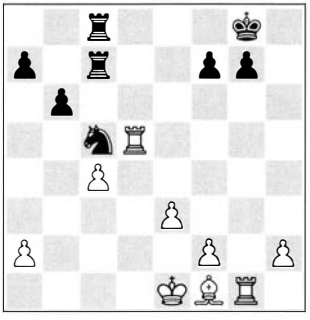
17...♖c7

Nothing comes from 17...f6, since White can simply play 18.h4, insisting on the break g4-g5.

18.g5 hxg5 19.♘xg5 ♖ac8

In general, he would like to preserve the bishop, but after 19...♗f5 20.♗g2 ♖ac8 21.♔e2 g6 22.♗d5 ♔g7 White also has a small advantage.

20.♘xe6 ♘xe6 21.♖d5 ♘c5 22.♖g1



White has weak queenside pawns, and one of these will probably be lost. In compensation, he can hardly be prevented from launching an attack on the kingside.

22...♘b7

Generally speaking, a logical move: Black wants to transfer the knight to a5, so as to attack the c4 pawn. But more subtle was 22...♘e4 23.h4 ♘c3!, attacking the pawn on a2, and if the white rook leaves the d-file, then Black himself occupies the file, threatening mate on d1. A possible continuation is 24.♖d2 (24.♖dg5 g6 25.h5 ♖d7⇄) 24...♔f8 25.♖g4 ♖c5≅.

23.h4 ♔f8 24.h5 ♖c5

This move is necessary to prevent the enemy rooks doubling on the g-file. If he plays 24...f6, with the same idea, then White replies 25.♗d3!±. Later White transfers his bishop to g6, and he has combinational threats, involving an attack on the king.

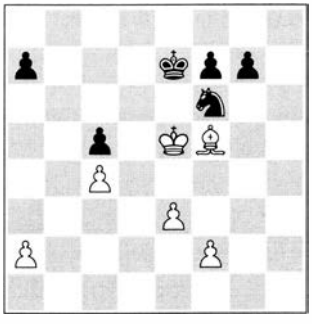
25.♖gg5 ♘d6?

Black should exchange only one pair of rooks, and keep the other. Correct was 25...♖a5!, and after 26.♖xa5 ♘xa5 Black has good chances of a draw.

26.♖xc5 ♖xc5 27.♖xc5 bxc5 28.♗d3 ♔e7 29.♔e2 ♘e8 30.♔f3!?

White does not cling onto the extra pawn, but concentrates on activating his king.

30...♘f6 31.♔f4 ♘xh5+ 32.♔e5 ♘f6 33.♗f5



Black needs to show great resourcefulness to hold this position. Defending such a position at a fast time control is very difficult, of course.

33...g6 34.♗h3 ♘e8 35.♔d5 ♘f6+ 36.♔c6

After 36.♔xc5? ♘e4+ 37.♔d4 ♘xf2 Black has a dangerous passed pawn, and would hardly be at risk of losing.

36...♘e4 37.f4 ♘f2 38.♗f1 ♘d1 39.e4 ♘c3 40.♔xc5 ♘xa2 41.e5 ♘c3?

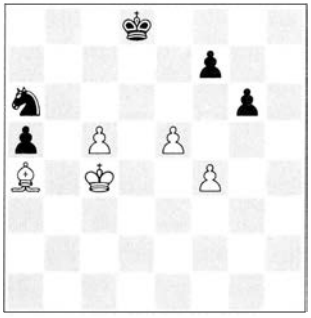
If one can believe Rybka, then Black has defended in the best way up to here, but now he should have exchanged another pair of pawns: 41...f6 42.exf6+ ♔xf6, after which the draw is not far away.

42.♔d4

The knight cannot return to its own camp, and the white passed pawn starts to march towards the queening square.

42...♘a2 43.c5 ♘b4 44.♗b5 ♔d8 45.♔c4 a5 46.♗a4 ♘a6?

Missing the opponent's strong reply. Correct was 46...♘a2!, and now White does not get anything from 47.♔b5 (better is 47.♔d4!, but after 47...♘b4 48.♗b3 ♘c6+ 49.♔c3 ♔e7 Black is still holding) 47...♘c3+ 48.♔xa5 ♘d5 and it seems that Black holds.



47.♔d5!

This is significantly stronger than 47.♔b5 ♘c7+ 48.♔c6 (48.♔xa5 ♘d5) 48...♘e6.

47...♘c7+ 48.♔d6 ♘e6 49.c6 ♘c7 50.♗b3 ♘e8+ 51.♔c5 ♔e7 52.♔b6 f6 53.♗c2 fxe5 54.fxe5

The fight ends more quickly after 54.♗xg6! ♘f6 55.♔b7 ♘d5 56.♗e4 ♘f6 57.fxe5! ♘xe4 58.c7.

54...a4 55.♗xa4 ♔d8 56.♗c2 g5 57.♗f5 ♘c7 58.♗h3 ♘a8+ 59.♔c5 ♔e7 60.♔d5 ♘c7+ 61.♔c5 ♘a8 62.♗g4 ♘c7 63.♔b6 ♔d8 64.♔b7 ♘e8 65.e6 ♘d6+ 66.♔b8 ♘b5 67.♗h3

Black resigned.

Chapter Seven

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5



Lipnitsky's book devotes only a couple of pages to this system, and this survey starts with the discouraging words: 'Some theoreticians think the immediate exchange in the centre is one of the best continuations for White, but it is hard to agree with this. Of course, White is risking little with 5.cxd5, but on the other hand, play tends to become rather drawish, and who is interested in playing like this? The simplifying line 5.cxd5 is one of the last that I would recommend in this position.'

Nowadays, of course, it is hard to read these words without a smile, since it is in precisely this very line that fierce battles take place between the leading contemporary grandmasters. In this chapter, you will find games by Carlsen, Aronian, Kramnik, Grischuk, Morozevich, Topalov, Mamedyarov and others. The amount of information grows like a yeast culture – in my work I have tried to point out all the important games, highlight all the critical positions, and in the process have realised very clearly that in this line, the assessment changes constantly. The computers, having closed off one old idea, then suggest several new ones, and the process may continue indefinitely.

In this line, one of Black's important problems is the trusty question: should we include the move ...h7-h6 or not? On the one hand, ...h7-h6 creates *luft* for the king, with tempo, but on the other, on g5 the bishop can come under attack from the knight on e4 and the queen on a5. This is because the modern treatment of this line as Black involves playing ...c7-c5 and bringing the queen to a5, unpinning the knight on f6, which strives to get to e4. Black often voluntarily exchanges the bishop for the knight at c3, plays ...c5-c4 and tries to organise a blockade on the light squares, and also to organise an attack with his pawn majority on the queenside. White, in his turn, prepares the break e3-e4. Another popular idea is to

exchange on c5 and try to exploit the weakness of the d5 pawn. Admittedly, such play involves a loss of tempo, and the black pieces develop great activity. If White manages to carry out this idea, then he will have excellent prospects in the end-game, but if not, then the battle can quickly end in Black's favour.

So, should Black play ...h7-h6 or not? There is no universal recipe here, and we have to settle for the banal: act according to circumstances. In annotating games, I always try to draw attention to those moments when the white dark-squared bishop comes under attack. In general, in my view it is more vulnerable on g5, therefore one should only play ...h7-h6 in those cases when one knows for sure that it is necessary (for example, because Black wishes to play ...g7-g5 and place the knight on e4).

Game 52
Chuchelov,Vladimir
Jobava,Baadur
Dresden 2007

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.d4 ♗b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5



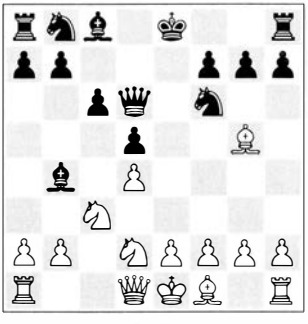
6...c5

It seems to me that this is not quite the most accurate move, since with 7.dxc5 0-0 8.e3 we reach a popular opening *tabiya*, which usually arises from the different move-order 6...0-0 7.e3 c5 8.dxc5, but on move 8, White has the additional possibility 8.♖c1!?. The main moves in the diagram position are 6...h6, 6...♘bd7 and 6...0-0, which we will examine later, but for now, a few words about less popular continuations.

A) **6...♕d6** A somewhat forgotten, but perfectly sensible move. Black escapes from the pin and leaves his pawn on h7 at the same time. Why is this necessary? The reason is that, in the Carlsbad structure, which arises as soon as Black puts his pawn on c6, Black often tries to create a piece attack on the kingside, and in this case, it is necessary that he should be able to bring a rook along the third rank to h6. If this square is occupies by a pawn, then it is usually difficult to develop any attack.

A1) A harmless line is **7.♗xf6 ♕xf6** There is no need to follow the second World Champion, who decided here to cover the e5-square, but hopelessly weakened his pawn structure: 7...gxf6?! 8.♕c2 ♘c6 9.e3 ♘e7 10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 f5 12.g3 ♗d7 13.♘e5 ♗e6 14.♘d3± Flohr-Lasker, Nottingham 1936. **8.♕b3 ♕b6!?** A somewhat provocative move, although the simple 8...♕d6 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.♕xc3 0-0 11.e3 ♗f5 12.♖c1 c6 13.♕b3 b6 14.♕b4 ♕e6 15.♕c3 ♖c8 16.♗e2 a5⇄ Hort-Larsen, Hastings 1972/73, does not look bad. **9.e3** Taking the pawn with 9.♕xd5?! is bad: Black now re-establishes material equality and seizes the initiative. The game could continue: 9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♕b2 11.♖d1 ♕xc3+ 12.♘d2 ♘c6 13.e3 ♗e6 14.♕e4 0-0-0. **9...c6 10.♗d3 ♘d7 11.0-0 0-0 12.a3 ♗e7 13.♕c2 g6 14.b4 a6 15.♘a4 ♕d8 16.♘c5 ♗d6⇄** Wojtaszek-Izoria, Moscow 2005;

A2) **7.♘d2** By closing the line of the bishop on b4, White threatens 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.♘xd5. **7...c6**

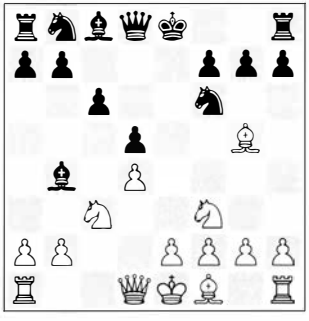


Analysis diagram

8.e3 Tempting is 8.♕c2, not allowing the enemy bishop to f5 and creating an interesting tactical threat, although the following game shows that the queen is not very well-placed on c2: 8...h6

9.♘b5 (this is the point of White's idea, but this beautiful raid turns out to be a blank shot) 9...♗xd2+ (9...♕d8 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♘c3 f5 12.g3± Sutkus-Milovanovic, Latvia 1992) 10.♗xd2 ♕e7 11.♘c3 0-0 12.e3 c5 13.♘e2 ♘e4 14.dxc5 ♘c6 15.♘g3 ♘xd2 16.♕xd2 ♕xc5 17.♗d3 d4 18.e4 ♗e6⇄ Inarkiev-Khalifman, Fügen 2006. **8...♗f5 9.♕b3** White has lured the enemy bishop to f5 and now he takes aim at the b7 pawn. **9...♕e7 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0** 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.a3 ♗d6⇄ offers no prospects. **11...a5 12.a3 ♗d6 13.♗f3 h6 14.♗xf6 ♕xf6 15.e4!** According to the classical canons – to exploit his lead in development, White opens up the position. **15...♗f4 16.♖ad1 ♗xd2 17.♖xd2 dxe4 18.♘xe4 ♗xe4 19.♗xe4±** Polugaevsky-Taimanov, Rostov on Don 1961.

B) **6...c6**

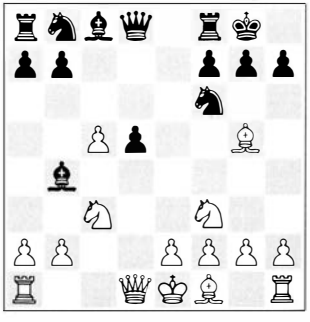


Analysis diagram

A solid, but somewhat passive move. Back refrains from the advance ...c7-c5 in favour of a solid Carlsbad. Admittedly, he will have to spend a further tempo redeploying the dark-squared bishop, which has nothing to do on b4. On the other hand, this loss of tempi is not so terrible, since in the Carlsbad proper, Black usually tries to redeploy his bishop from e7 to the more active square d6.

Allow me to offer the amateur a small piece of advice: if you do not have the time to study the complicated Ragozin lines which occur in this chapter, then play simply 6...c6, and you will get a solid position, which can more or less be played on the basis of 'general considerations'. **7.♕c2** 7.♕b3 ♗e7 8.e3 ♕b6!? 9.♗d3 ♕xb3 10.axb3 a5 11.0-0 ♘bd7⇄ Van Scheltinga-Fine, Amsterdam 1936. **7...♘bd7** A more aggressive treatment also deserves consideration: 7...h6 8.♗h4 ♘bd7 9.e3 g5 10.♗g3 ♘e4 11.♘d2 (11.♗d3!?±) 11...♘xg3 12.hxg3 ♘f6 13.♗d3 ♕e7 14.0-0-0 ♗e6 15.♔b1 0-0-0 16.♘a4 ♔b8 17.♘b3 b6⇄ Kortchnoi-Podgaets, Sochi 1970. This old game was played in a training match, in which experienced grandmasters were opposed by young masters. Kortchnoi managed to win the game, but not because of the opening. **8.e3 0-0 9.♗d3 h6 10.♗h4 a6 11.0-0** A sensible decision; the king will feel much quieter at g1 than c1. **11...♖e8 12.a3 ♗d6 13.♖fe1 ♕c7 14.e4! dxe4 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♗xe4±** Yermolinsky-J.Williams, Stillwater 2009. White has obtained a small advantage, but Black's position is perfectly defensible.

7.dxc5 0-0



8.♖c1

After **8.e3** ♘**bd7** we reach a popular opening *tabiya*, which we will see later.

8...♗e6

Black got a very bad position after **8...♘bd7** 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.♖xc3 h6 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.♕d4! (this both defends the extra pawn and prevents a check on a5) 12...♘e4 13.♖c1 ♕a5+ 14.♕b4 ♕xb4+ 15.axb4 a5 16.b5 ♗d7 17.♘d4± Vallejo Pons-Aronian, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005. Levon managed to draw, but the opening had gone very wrong!

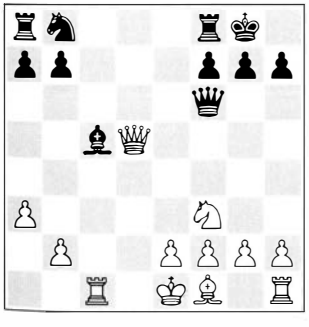
9.a3

More precise is **9.e3**, after which Black is practically forced to bring his queen's knight out to d7. This is how events could then develop: **9...♘bd7 10.a3 ♗xc5 11.♗b5** 11.♗e2 ♖c8 12.0-0 a6 13.♘d4 ♗e7 14.♗d3 ♘e5 15.♗b1 ♘c4 16.♕b3 b5⇄ Grivas-Arutinian, Kocaeli 2008. **11...♗e7 12.0-0** ♘**c5** (Chuchelov-V.Gaprindashvili, Warsaw 2005) **13.**♘**d4±**.

9...♗xc5 10.♗xf6?!

Neglecting his development, White goes in for a distinct adventure. Here too, **10.e3** was correct, although now Black can develop his knight to the more active square c6.

10...♕xf6 11.♘xd5 ♗xd5 12.♕xd5



12...♘a6!

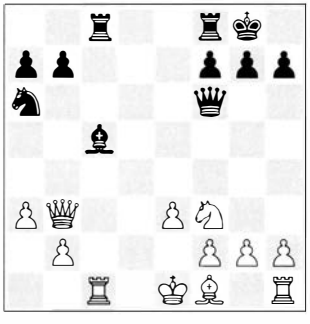
In the database, I found a game one hundred years old(!), which reached this very position. White obtained the advantage after **12...♗b6 13.♕e5 ♕g6 14.e3** ♘**d7 15.♕g5±** Swiderski-Schories, Ostend 1907. It is hard to believe that Grandmaster Chuchelov was aiming for precisely this... The developing text move is more than natural, and is also praised by the computer.

13.♕b3

13.♖xc5 does not work because of 13...♖fd8 14.♕e5 ♘xc5, and White cannot take the knight because of 15.♕xc5 ♖ac8 16.♕e3 ♕xb2 with mate in a few moves.

13...♖ac8 14.e3

After **14.♖d1** there would follow **14...♗b6!**, and there is no satisfactory defence to the check at a5.



14...♗b4+! 15.♔d1 ♖fd8+ 16.♘d4 ♗c5

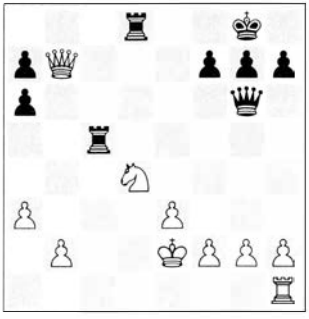
Black could enter an endgame with an extra pawn by force with 16...♕xf2!? 17.axb4 ♖xc1+ 18.♔xc1 ♕e1+ 19.♕d1 ♕xe3+ 20.♕d2 ♕xd4 21.♕xd4 ♖xd4 22.b5 ♘c5, but prefers to continue the attack. A perfectly prac-

tical decision, since realising the extra pawn would require a good deal of time and effort, whereas the white king can hardly hope to survive in the centre, surrounded by enemy pieces.

17.♗xa6 bxa6 18.♖xc5

It is already hard to know what White should play here, e.g. 18.♖c2 ♗xd4 19.exd4 ♕xd4+ 20.♔c1 ♕xf2 21.♔b1 (21.♖xc8 ♖xc8+ 22.♔b1 ♕xg2) 21...♕f5! 22.♖c1 ♖d2 with a decisive attack.

18...♖xc5 19.♔e2 ♕g6 20.♕b7



20...♖c2+!

Jobava finishes the game effectively.

21.♘xc2 ♕g4+!

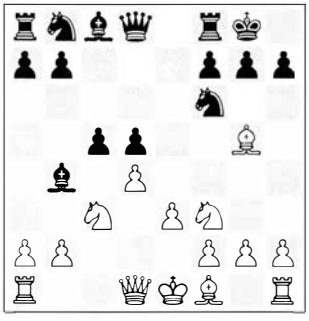
White resigned in view of such simple variations as 22.♕f3 (22.f3 ♕xg2+, 22.♔f1 ♖d1+ 23.♘e1 ♕c4+ 24.♔g1 ♖xe1#) 22...♕c4+ 23.♔e1 ♕xc2.

Game 53
Moiseenko,Alexander
Jobava,Baadur
Gothenburg 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 0-0 7.e3

7.♕b3 looks dubious because of **7...c5 8.dxc5** More cautious is 8.a3 ♗xc3+ 9.♕xc3, but here too, after 9...c4 10.g3 ♘c6 11.♗g2 ♖e8 12.♘e5 ♕a5 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.♘f3 ♗f5 15.e3 ♗d3 Black seizes the initiative, A. Mastrovasilis-Gajewski, Cappelle la Grande 2011. **8...♘c6 9.e3 ♗e6 10.♘d4 ♗xc5 11.♖d1 h6 12.♗h4 ♗g4 13.♗xf6** It is extremely risky to play 13.f3 ♖e8! 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.fxg4 g5 with a dangerous attack for White, Gagunashvili-Jobava, Warsaw 2005. **13...♕xf6 14.♗e2 ♘xd4 15.exd4 ♗xd4 16.0-0 ♗xe2 17.♘xe2 ♗b6 18.♘c3 d4∓** Wirig-Gajewski, Cappelle la Grande 2011.

7...c5



'The so-called Westphalia Variation in its modern form – Black delays the move ...♘bd7, which is essential in this structure, in order to start action in the centre immediately' – Kortchnoi.

8.♗d3

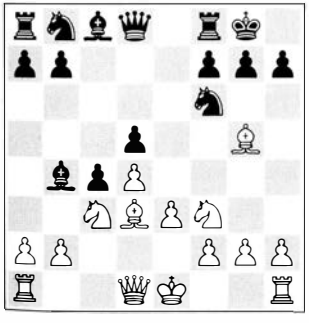
The move **8.♗e2** is worth consideration, as played long ago in the game Bronstein-Levenfish, Leningrad 1947. The idea is that after ...c5-c4 (which is the move Black plans, to start his pawn offensive on the queenside), the bishop will go to f3, and attack the d5 pawn, whilst at the right moment, White will

advance e3-e4. All of this is interesting, but a little slow, and Black, by reinforcing the d5 pawn, can happily play a position with an IQP: **8...♗e6!?** A solid, but slightly passive continuation. Black can also permit himself a more ambitious set-up: 8...♘bd7 9.0-0 h6 10.♗h4 ♕a5 11.♕c2 c4 12.♘d2 ♖e8 13.♗f3 g5 14.♗g3 ♘b6 15.a3 ♗xc3 16.bxc3 ♕a4 17.♕b1 ♕c6 18.♗d1 ♘e4 19.♘xe4 dxe4 20.a4 ♘d5 with good chances, Kazhgaleev-Jobava, Dresden 2008. **9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.dxc5 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♘xc5 12.♕d4 ♘ce4 13.♖fc1 ♕a5 14.♕b4 ♕xb4 15.cxb4 ♘xg5 16.♘xg5 ♖fc8** draw, Ftacnik-Laznicka, Czech Republic 2010.

We will look in detail later on at the popular *tabiya* which arises after **8.dxc5**.

8...c4

This is Black's idea – he seizes space on the queenside with tempo. In the old game Spielmann-Marshall, Prague 1931, Black decided to simplify the position somewhat with **8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♘c6 10.0-0 ♗xc3**, but after 11.bxc3 ♘e5 12.♖b1 (also good is 12.♗e2 h6 13.♗h4 ♘g6 14.♗xf6 ♕xf6 15.♕b3 ♖d8 16.♖fd1± Macieja-Kempinski, Warsaw 2008) 12...h6 13.♗h4 a6 14.a4 White had a small, but stable advantage.



9.♗b1

Kortchnoi considers this move to be clearly bad and awards it a question mark, but in my opinion, this is too categorical an assessment. White's idea is not so bad: to put the queen on c2, create a queen and bishop battery on the b1-h7 diagonal, and give mate on h7. The idea is simple and understandable, but it is not so easy to defend against.

Worth consideration is **9.♗xf6!? ♕xf6 10.♗b1 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♘c6** 11...♗f5 12.♗xf5 ♕xf5 13.♕b1 ♕d7 14.♘e5 ♕e7 15.♕b5 ♖d8 16.0-0 f6 17.♘f3 ♘c6⇄. **12.♘d2 ♕e7 13.a4 f5 14.0-0 b6 15.♖e1 ♗e6⇄** Khuzman-Moiseenko, Moscow 2006. It is not so easy for White to make progress in the centre, whilst Black, after a small amount of preparation, can prepare to advance his queenside pawns.

The most popular move in this position is **9.♗c2**, which we will examine later in the game Van Wely-Carlsen.

9...♗xc3+

Black wants a target for his queenside operations, namely the pawn on c3. Less accurate is **9...♘bd7** 10.♕c1 ♖e8 11.0-0 ♕a5 12.♘d2 ♗xc3 13.♕xc3 ♕xc3 14.bxc3 – White has managed to cover the e4-square, and also exchanged queens (this is favourable for him, since the black queen was the more actively-placed). After 14...h6 15.♗f4 ♘b6 16.a4 ♗d7 17.♗c2 ♘e4 18.♗xe4 dxe4 19.a5 ♘d5 20.♘xc4 ♘xc3 21.♖fe1± Gelashvili-Bartel, Turin 2006 White has a stable advantage, thanks to the protected passed pawn and pressure in the centre.

10.bxc3 ♘bd7



11.♕c2?!

Creating real threats on the b1-h7 diagonal is not easy, so White should wonder whether he should play e3-e4, breaking the central blockade ring.

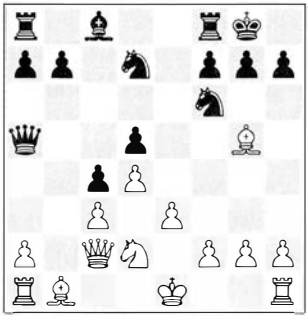
In Kortchnoi's opinion, after **11.♘d2 ♕a5 12.♕c1!?** White stands better, since he can gradually take control of the dark squares. But is this so easy? There could follow 12...♘e4 13.♗xe4 dxe4 14.♗e7 (14.♘xe4? ♖e8≌) 14...♖e8 15.♕a3 ♕xa3 16.♗xa3 b5⇄.

Transferring the queen to c3 via another route – **11.♕a4 ♕b6 12.♕a3** – also allows Black sufficient resources to create counterplay: **12...♘e4** Another plan also deserves attention – Black can place the queen on e6 and fianchetto the bishop: 12...♕e6 13.0-0 b6 14.♗c2 ♗b7 15.♖ae1 ♘e4 16.♗f4 f6⇄ Saravanan-Arutinian, Palma de Mallorca 2008. **13.0-0 ♖e8 14.♗c2** 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.♘d2 ♕c6 16.f3 exf3 17.♖xf3 f6 18.♗h4 b5 19.e4 ♗b7 20.♖e1 a5⇄ Galliamova-T.Kosintseva, Gorodets 2006. **14...♕e6 15.♗f4 f6 16.♗g3 b6 17.♕b4 ♗b7 18.a4 ♗c6 19.♖fd1 a6** draw, Rowson-Kacheishvili, Turin 2006.

11...♕a5

Black unpins the knight and thus prepares 12...♘e4, attacking the c3 pawn.

12.♘d2



12...♘e4!

In the following game, Black played more slowly with **12...♖e8** 13.♗f4 ♘f8 14.0-0 ♘g6 15.♗g3 ♘e4 16.♘xe4 dxe4 17.♕b2 ♕g5 18.a4 h5 19.♕b5! (thanks to this manoeuvre, White manages to extinguish his opponent's activity on the kingside) 19...♕xb5 20.axb5 h4 21.♗d6± Pantsulaia-Frolyanov, Yerevan 2006.

13.♘xe4

We will also look at another plan, in which the knight is not exchanged off, but driven away: **13.♗e7 ♖e8 14.♗b4 ♕c7 15.a4 ♘df6 16.f3 ♘xd2 17.♕xd2** In the game Bobras-Gajewski, Krakow 2006, White played 17.♔xd2?!, but this looks too risky. **17...♗d7 18.♗c2** 18.0-0 a5 19.♗a3 ♗xa4. **18...♕f4 19.0-0** 19.♔f2? ♘g4+; 19.♔e2 ♗f5∓. **19...♕xe3+ 20.♕xe3 ♖xe3 21.♖fe1 –** White has good compensation for the sacrificed pawn, although it seems insufficient for equality.

13...dxe4



As we see, in this variation, the inclusion of ...h6 ♗h4 (at whatever moment) would have favoured White, since his bishop would not now be attacked.

14.♗h4

In the variation **14.♗e7 ♖e8 15.♗b4 ♕g5 16.0-0 ♘b6∓** Black creates pressure on the kingside, and the knight transfers to d5.

After **14.♕xe4?** Black replies simply **14...g6**, after which White has both the bishop and the c3 pawn hanging.

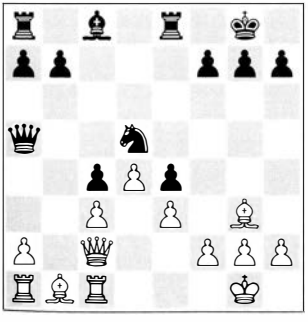
14...♘b6 15.0-0

The pawn is invulnerable at the moment: 15.♕xe4? ♕xc3+ 16.♔e2 f5≅.

15...♖e8 16.♗g3?!

Allows Black to block the queenside. Better was **16.a3** ♘d5 17.♗a2 b5 18.♖fc1 or the pawn sac 16.a4!? ♗d7 17.♗g3.

16...♘d5 17.♖c1



17...♕a3!

The white pieces create a striking impression, of course. Note that he put the bishop on b1 completely voluntarily!

18.♕d2 ♗f5

Continuing the light-square strategy so beloved of Lipnitsky. However, it seems that 18...f6 19.h3 b5 was more accurate.

19.f3

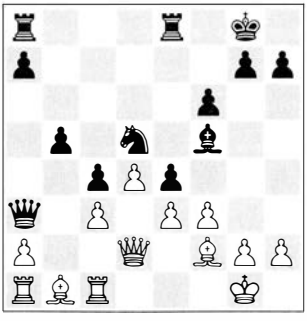
Positional methods of freeing himself from the bind already fail. It was possible to invite Black to devour a pawn: 19.♗c2! ♘xc3 (19...♕xc3 20.♕e2) 20.♗b3! cxb3 21.♖xc3 b2! 22.♖b1 ♕xa2 23.♖xb2 ♕a6 24.♖a2 ♕b5 25.♖b2, and Black, in order not to lose the pawn b7, should agree to a repetition of moves.

However, Black is not forced to take on c3, and 19...♗g4! is stronger, retaining all the advantages of his position.

19...f6!

It is important to take control of the square e5, in order to prevent the enemy bishop coming there.

20.♗f2 b5



Black has a superb position, having achieved everything of which he dreams in the Ragozin.

21.fxe4 ♗xe4

'Some people would prefer to take the pawn with the rook!' – Kortchnoi.

22.♗xe4 ♖xe4 23.♖ab1 a6 24.♕b2 ♕xb2 25.♖xb2 ♘b6!

An important move: Black first suppresses his opponent's counterplay, involving the advance a2-a4, and will then bring his king into the centre.

26.♔f1 ♔f7 27.♔e2 ♔e6 28.♔f3 ♔d5

It is understandable that Black does not want to play 28...f5, because then White will be able to bring his bishop to e5, but it was worth considering 28...♔f5!?, preventing White's next move.

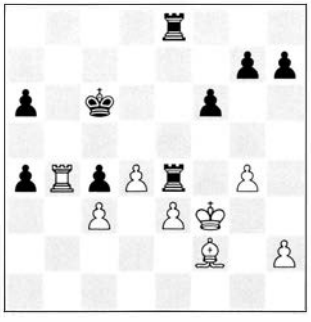
29.g4 ♖ae8 30.♖a1 ♔c6

Black directs his king to the defence of the queenside, whilst the d5-square is freed for the knight, from where it can attack White's weak pawns.

31.a4!?

Not wishing passively to await his fate, White prefers to sacrifice the exchange.

31...♘xa4 32.♖xa4 bxa4 33.♖b4



The position has been transformed. Black has an extra exchange and pawn, but all of his queenside pawns are weak.

33...a5! 34.♖xc4+ ♔b5 35.♖c5+ ♔b6 36.♖c4 ♖4e6!

The black rooks need open lines and the king needs a square via which to break into the white queenside.

37.♖xa4

He has to acknowledge that the local battle is lost as well. Of course, White would like to play 37.d5, setting his pawn centre in motion, but there would follow 37...♖e4!, and White cannot win the rook, since the a4 pawn queens.

37...♔b5 38.♖a3 ♖a6 39.d5 a4 40.e4 ♔c4 41.♗g3

White has set up his last line of defence. After 41.♔e3 the move 41...g6 followed by ...f6-f5 decides.

41...♔d3!

The king comes to aid his passed pawn.

42.d6

He also loses after 42.♗c7 ♔c2 43.♖a1 ♔b2 44.♖d1 a3 45.d6 a2 46.d7 ♖ea8 47.d8♕ ♖xd8 48.♗xd8 a1♕ 49.♖xa1 ♖xa1.

42...♖d8

More accurate is 42...♔c2 43.c4 ♔b2 44.♖d3 a3 45.d7 ♖d8 46.♗c7 ♖xd7 47.♖xd7 ♔c2 48.♔e2 a2 49.♖d1 a1♕ 50.♖xa1 ♖xa1.

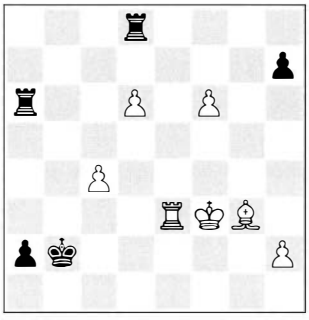
43.g5?!

Some saving chances remain after 43.e5 fxe5 44.♗xe5, but here too, Black should win with accurate play.

43...♔c2 44.c4 ♔b2 45.♖e3 a3 46.gxf6 gxf6 47.e5

After 47.c5 a2 48.♗e1 a1♕ 49.♗c3+ ♔c2 50.♗xa1 ♖xa1 the powerful white pawn pair are not going any further.

47...a2 48.exf6



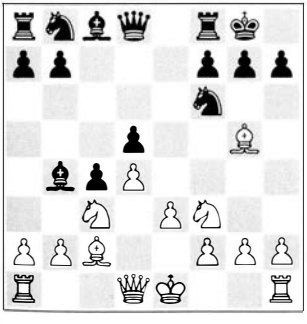
48...♖dxd6! 49.♗e5+

Or 49.♗xd6 ♖xd6 50.♖e2+ ♔b3 51.♖e3+ ♔b4 52.♖e1 ♖xf6+, winning.

49...♔c2 50.♖e2+ ♔b3 51.♖b2+ ♔xc4 52.♖xa2 ♖d3+ 53.♔e4 ♖xa2 54.f7 ♖f2 0-1

Game 54
Van Wely,Loek
Carlsen,Magnus
Wijk aan Zee 2007

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♗g5 0-0 6.e3 c5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗d3 c4 9.♗c2



Now it is much more difficult for White to establish a battery on the b1-h7 diagonal, but he is not particularly going to strive for this anyway. He is more concerned to remove the bishop to a convenient post, where it controls the square f5 and supports the advance e3-e4, and at the same time, does not disconnect the rooks.

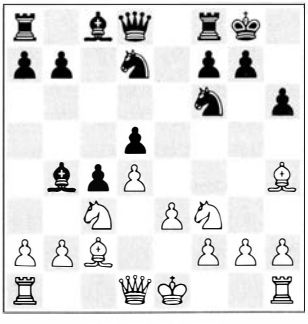
9...♘bd7

The main continuation, but some other set-ups also deserve consideration:

A) **9...♗g4** 10.0-0 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♘bd7 12.♕c1 ♕a5 13.♘d2 ♘e4 14.♘xe4 dxe4 15.♗e7 ♖fe8 16.♕a3 ♕d5⇄ Babula-Movsesian, Czech Republic 2007/08;

B) **9...♗e6** 10.0-0 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♘bd7 12.♘e5 ♕a5 13.♘xd7 ♘xd7 14.♕d2 ♘b6 15.a4 ♗d7 16.♗e7 ♖fe8 17.♗b4 ♕a6 18.a5 ♘c8 19.f3± Schandorff-Carlsen, Aalborg 2006;

C) Once the pawn structure in the centre has been clarified, it makes sense for Black to include the moves **9...h6 10.♗h4** and only now play **10...♘bd7**.



Analysis diagram

In my opinion, in this position, Black is unlikely to be able to exploit the vulnerability of the bishop on g5, whereas having a bolthole for the king could well come in useful.

Practice has then seen: **11.0-0 ♕a5 12.♘e2** 12.♖c1 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♕xa2

14.♘d2 ♕a6 15.f3 b5 16.e4 ♕b6 17.e5 ♘xe5 18.♗xf6 gxf6 19.f4 ♘g4 – I believe Black's chances are superior here, although White has definite compensation for the sacrificed material, I.Sokolov-Alexandrov, Poikovsky 2002; 12.♕c1 ♖e8 13.♘d2 ♗e7 14.h3 b5 15.a3 ♗b7 16.f4 ♕b6 17.♘f3 a5 18.♘e5 ♘f8 19.♘e2 ♖ac8⇄ Damljanovic-Alexandrov, Budva 2002. **12...♖e8 13.b3 ♗a3 14.bxc4 dxc4 15.♖b1 b5 16.♘e5 a6 17.f4 ♘xe5 18.fxe5 ♘d5⇄** Kir.Georgiev-Kacheishvili, Dubai 2005.

10.0-0 ♕a5

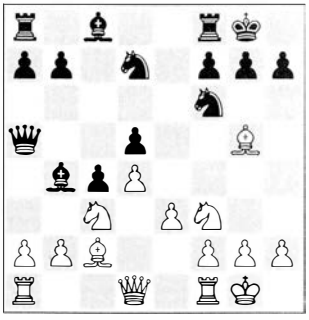
The alternative is **10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♕a5**. Black hits the pawn on c3, but in reply, White tries to use his lead in development to create complications. **12.♘e5**:

A) **12...♘e4** is very dangerous because of **13.♗e7 ♖e8 14.♗b4 ♕c7**, and here White has a choice between two tempting continuations:

A1) **15.♘xf7!? a5** The knight cannot be taken: 15...♔xf7? 16.♕h5+ g6 17.♕xh7+. **16.♗xe4 ♖xe4** (D. Berczes-Movsesian, Germany Bundesliga 2007/08) **17.♗d6 ♕c6 18.♕f3 ♘f6 19.♘h6+! ♔h8 20.♗e5±**;

A2) Also good is the quiet **15.♗xe4** ♘xe5 16.♗xd5 ♘d3 17.♕f3 ♘xb4 18.cxb4± B.Savchenko-Emelin, Budva 2009;

B) **12...♕xc3 13.♘xd7** After 13.♖c1 ♕a3 14.♕f3 ♕d6 15.♕g3 h6 16.♗xh6 ♘h5 17.♕h3 ♘df6 18.♕h4 gxh6 19.f4 ♘g7 White does not have sufficient compensation for the piece, Shirov-Dreev, Riga 1987. **13...♘xd7 14.♕b1 ♖e8** 14...g6 15.♗e7 ♖e8? 16.♗b4+–. **15.♗xh7+ ♔h8 16.♗c2 ♘f8 17.♗a4 ♖e6 18.♕b5±** Alekhine-Vidmar, New York 1927.

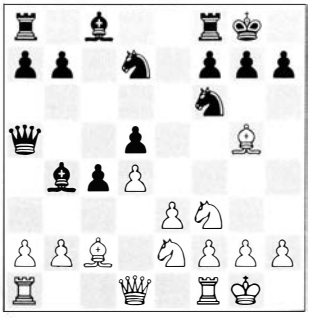


We have already seen a similar position above, but there the moves ...h6 and ♗h4 had been included. In this version, White has much the same possibilities at his disposal.

11.♖c1

A) The jump **11.♘e5** is tempting, but then Black can significantly reduce the force of the attack by a couple of exchanges: **11...♗xc3** 11...♖e8 12.♘xd7 ♘xd7 13.♘e2 ♘f8 14.♘f4 ♗d6 15.♘h5 ♕c7 16.♕f3 ♘g6 17.h4 draw, Jussupow-Milov, Dresden 1998. **12.bxc3 ♘xe5 13.dxe5** Nothing comes from 13.♗xf6 ♘g6. **13...♘e4 14.♗e7 ♖e8 15.♗b4 ♕c7 16.♕xd5 ♖xe5 17.♕d4 ♗f5 18.♖ad1 ♖ee8⇄** Radjabov-Carlsen, Rishon le Zion 2006;

B) **11.♘e2** is worth considering.



Analysis diagram

The idea is to underline the not entirely satisfactory position of the black queen

and bishop, which are now firing into the air. But the white pieces are also rather bunched in the centre. **11...♖e8** The immediate knight jump into the centre also looks good: 11...♘e4 12.♗f4 ♖e8 13.a3 ♗f8 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.♘d2 ♘b6 16.♘c3 ♗f5 17.♗c7 ♕a6 18.f3 exf3 19.♕xf3 ♗g6⇄ Zhukova-Kosteniuk, Turin 2006. **12.a3 ♗f8 13.♘d2 b5 14.♘c3 ♗b7 15.♕f3 ♕b6 16.g4** A risky plan; 16.♕h3 ♗c6 17.♖ae1 looks quieter, but here too, Black has good play on the queenside. **16...h6 17.♗f4 ♘e4 18.♘dxe4 dxe4 19.♕g3 a5⇄** Korotylev-Alexandrov, Sochi 2006;

C) **11.♕c1** ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘e4 13.♗e7 ♖e8 14.♗b4 ♕c7 15.♘d2 a5 16.♘xe4 dxe4 17.♕a3 ♖a6 18.♗e7 ♖h6⇄ Predojevic-T.Kosintseva, Lausanne 2006.

11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘e4

The preparatory **12...♖e8** is worth considering, e.g. 13.♘d2 ♘e4 14.♘xe4 dxe4 15.♗h4 ♘b6 16.f3 ♗f5 17.♗b1 (17.fxe4 ♗xe4 18.♖xf7! ♗xc2! 19.♕xc2 ♕h5! with sufficient counterplay for Black) 17...♗g6 18.♕d2 ♘d5∓ S.Williams-Logothetis, Kusadasi 2006.

Obviousy the c3 pawn cannot be taken, and taking on a2 also looks very risky: **12...♕xa2** 13.♘e5 (without the inclusion of ...h6 and ♗h4 this direct move looks stronger than the knight retreat to d2, as played by Ivan Sokolov against Alexandrov) 13...♕a5 14.♘xd7 ♘xd7 15.♕h5 with dangerous threats on the kingside. Black can hardly allow himself 15...h6 because of the bishop sacrifice, so he is forced to weaken the kingside quite significantly with 15...g6 or 15...f5.

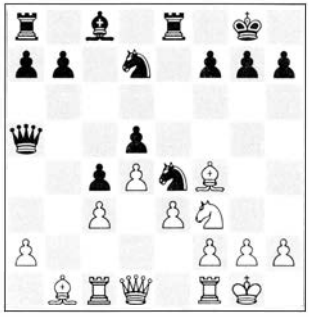
13.♗b1

It is useful to point out once again that **13.♗xe4? dxe4** leads to the loss of a piece, whereas with the inclusion of ...h6 and ♗h4, this exchange could be recommended.

13...♖e8

After **13...♘xc3? 14.♕d2** Black loses a piece, whilst **13...♘xg5?! 14.♘xg5** only helps White develop his initiative on the kingside.

14.♗f4



14...♘b6

An aggressive move, fully in Carlsen's style – he directs the knight to a4, to win the c3 pawn. However, it looks more accurate to play **14...♘f8**, e.g. 15.♕c2 ♘g6 16.♗g3 ♗f5 17.♕b2 ♕b6 18.♕a3 h5 19.♖fe1 ♕f6⇄ Zubarev-Sargissian, Saratov 2006. Here it is Black who tries to develop activity on the kingside.

15.♘e5!

White should seek his fortune on the kingside!

15...f6?!

Obviously, **15...♘xc3?** loses to the typical sacrifice **16.♗xh7+**.

Here Black has to exercise caution with **15...♗e6**, after which White would have to choose between **16.♕h5** and **16.♕e1**.

16.♕h5 ♗e6?

As International Master Max Notkin pointed out, Black should have thought about the h7 pawn and played **16...♖e7**. In the variation 17.f3 fxe5 18.♗xe5 ♘f6 19.♗xf6 gxf6 White can give perpetual check with 20.♗xh7+! ♖xh7 21.♕e8+ ♔g7 22.♕e7+ ♔g6 23.♕e8+, but hardly has anything better. Probably, instead of 17.f3, he should play 17.♘g4 with a double-edged position.



17.f3! fxe5 18.♗xe5 ♗f7

After 18...♘f6 19.♗xf6 gxf6 the undefended h7 pawn tells: 20.♕xh7+ ♔f8 21.♗g6 with a strong attack.

19.♕h3

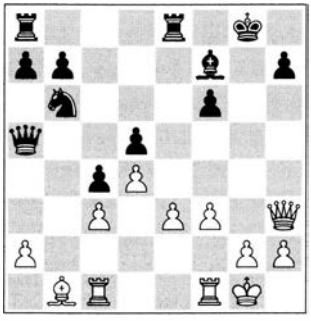
After 19.♕h4 Black can, by returning the material, somewhat simplify the position: 19...♘d7! 20.fxe4 ♘xe5 21.dxe5 ♗g6 22.exd5 ♗xb1 23.♖xb1 ♕xd5. Admittedly, after 24.♕d4 ♕c6 25.♖f4 White has a large advantage, despite his doubled pawns. But Van Wely wants more.

19...♘f6

19...♘g5 loses: 20.♕f5 h6 21.h4.

After 19...♗g6!? 20.fxe4 dxe4 Rybka suggests 21.♗c2± with the idea of transferring the bishop via d1 and g4, to a more active position.

20.♗xf6 gxf6



21.♕h6!

A superb quiet move, which does not allow the black king to escape from the corner. It is quite possible that Carlsen had missed this in his earlier calculations.

21...♗g6 22.♗xg6 hxg6 23.♕xg6+ ♔f8 24.♕xf6+ ♔g8 25.♕g6+

By repeating moves, Van Wely obviously wanted to gain time on the clock. But the immediate 25.f4! was very strong, after which 25...♖xe3? is bad because of 26.f5 and the white pawns and pieces are effectively included in the attack.

25...♔f8 26.♕f6+ ♔g8 27.e4

As I have already said, it was better to advance the f-pawn, after which there would be a threat to transfer the rook along the third rank.

27...♕b5 28.♕g6+ ♔f8 29.♕f6+ ♔g8 30.♕g6+ ♔f8 31.e5

White was obviously in serious time-trouble, and is playing by instinct. Even so, he has not lost his advantage: the four connected pawns are clearly stronger than the knight.

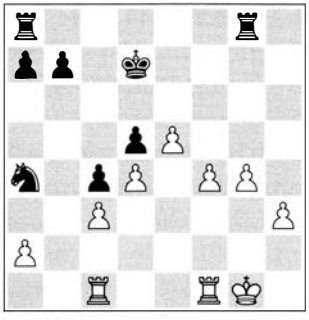
31...♕c6 32.♕f5+

The ending is probably winning for White, but with the queens on the board, the king would have felt very uncomfortable on f8.

32...♔e7 33.♕h7+ ♔d8 34.f4 ♕d7 35.♕xd7+

Rybka confirms that this is the strongest move, but from a human point of view, I feel it was better to retain the queens.

35...♔xd7 36.g4 ♖g8 37.h3 ♘a4



Having attacked the pawn on c3, Black has obtained definite counterplay.

38.♔g2

Worth consideration was 38.♖c2!? b5 39.f5 a5 40.♖b1 ♖ab8 41.a3 – having fended off the threat of a pawn advance on the queenside, White can continue to push his own pawns.

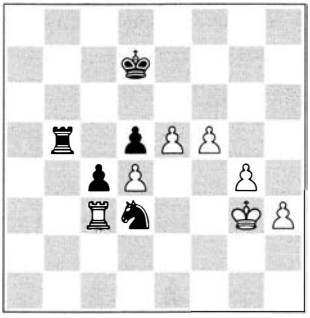
38...b5 39.♔g3 a5 40.a3 b4! 41.cxb4 axb4 42.axb4 ♘b2

Carlsen, as always, defends very ingeniously; by giving up another pawn, he places his faith in the pawn c4.

43.♖c3

A more precise winning line was 43.f5!, e.g.: 43...♖a3+ 44.♖f3 ♖xf3+ 45.♔xf3 ♘d3 46.♖a1 ♘xb4 47.♖a7+ ♔c6 48.f6 c3 49.♔e2, and White wins.

43...♘d3 44.b5 ♖gb8 45.♖b1 ♖a5 46.f5 ♖axb5 47.♖xb5 ♖xb5



Black has achieved the maximum and now threatens 48...♖b3, and his passed pawn advances. Even so, White has not yet missed the win.

48.e6+?!

It was better to activate the rook with 48.♖a3! Now after 48...♖b3 49.e6+ ♔d6 50.♖a6+ ♔c7 a pawn breakthrough decides things: 51.f6! ♘b4+ 52.♔h4 ♘xa6 53.f7 ♖f3 54.e7, and the white queen should easily cope with the scattered black forces.

48...♔e7?

Significantly more tenacious was 48...♔d6! 49.♖a3 ♘b4, preventing the white rook starting an attack from the flank. Even so, after 50.♔f4 ♘c6 51.♖a6 c3 52.♔e3 White retains great winning chances.

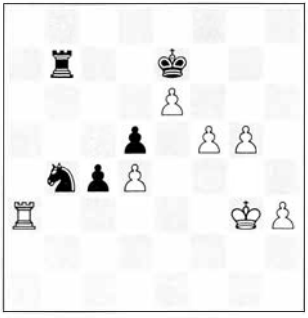
49.♖a3 ♖b7

49...♖b3 does not save the game because of 50.♖a7+ ♔f8 (50...♔d6 51.♖d7+

♔c6 52.♖d8 ♘c1+ 53.♔f4 ♘e2+ 54.♔g5 ♖e3 55.f6?) 51.h4 ♘e5+ 52.♔f4 ♘c6 53.♖c7 ♘xd4 54.♔e5.

Notkin pointed out a nice resource: 49...♘c5! with the idea of 50.dxc5? ♖b3+! 51.♖xb3 cxb3, and Black draws. Nor does 50.♖a7+ ♖b7 give anything, but White can decline the Greek Gift with 50.♔f4! ♖b3 51.♖a1 ♘xe6+ 52.fxe6 ♔xe6 53.h4 and this ending should be winning.

50.g5 ♘b4



51.♖e3!

The final touch, after which the white pawns are unstoppable.

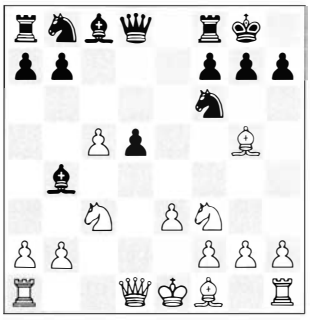
51...♘c6 52.f6+ ♔d6 53.♔g4 c3 54.e7 c2

Also hopeless is 54...♘xe7 55.fxe7 ♖xe7 56.♖xc3.

55.♖c3 ♖b8 56.♖xc2 ♘xd4 57.♖b2 ♖c8 58.g6 ♘e6 59.♖b6+ ♔d7 60.♖b7+ 1-0

Game 55
Tregubov,Pavel
Drozdovsky,Yury
Odessa 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 0-0 7.e3 c5 8.dxc5



8...♘bd7

In recent times, the slightly passive but solid plan **8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♗e6** has achieved a definite degree of popularity. Black weakens the pressure against d5 and reinforces it, whilst himself giving the opponent a weakness on c3. Play could continue:

A) **10.♗e2** ♘bd7 11.♕d4 ♖c8 12.c6 bxc6 13.0-0 h6 14.♗h4 c5 15.♕a4 g5 16.♗g3 ♘e4⇄ Turov-Kacheishvili, Kusadasi 2006;

B) **10.♗b5!?** Preventing Black from continuing his development with 10...♘bd7. **10...h6** He should not weaken the kingside without reason: 10...♕a5?! 11.♗xf6 gxf6 (11...♕xb5 12.♗d4 ♘d7 13.♖b1 ♕c6 14.0-0 ♘xc5 15.♗xc5 ♕xc5 16.♖xb7 ♕xc3 17.♘d4±) 12.♕b3 d4 13.♕b4 ♕xb4 14.cxb4 dxe3 15.♗e2 a5 16.b5 ♖c8 17.♖c1± Kempinski-Kacheishvili, Turin 2006. **11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♕d4 ♕e7 13.♘d2 ♖c8 14.♘b3 a6** with mutual chances, Elianov-Arutinian, Dresden 2007;

C) **10.♖b1** ♘bd7 11.♕d4 ♕c7 12.♗b5 ♖fc8 13.0-0 ♕xc5 14.♗xd7 ♘xd7 15.♖xb7 ♕xc3 16.♗f4 ♕a3 17.♘g5 ♖c4 18.♕d1± Naer-Arutinian, Dresden 2007;

D) **10.c4!?** dxc4 11.♕xd8 ♖xd8 12.♘d4 ♗d5 13.♖c1 ♖c8 14.f3 ♖xc5

15.e4 ♘c6 16.♘xc6 ♗xc6 17.♗e3 ♖e5 18.♖xc4± Gustafsson-Shengelia, Austria 2008/09.

9.♖c1

Black is not presented with any special danger after **9.♗d3 ♕a5 10.0-0 ♗xc3 11.bxc3**

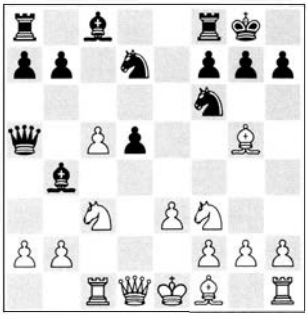


Analysis diagram

11...♘e4 Black first gives his opponent a weak pawn on c3, and now starts to pay it 'care and attention'. 11...♕xc3?! 12.♖c1 was bad, as was 11...♘xc5? 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♗c2, but it is worth considering 11...♕xc5 12.♖c1 (intending the break c3-c4) 12...b6 13.c4 ♗b7 14.cxd5 ♕xd5 with chances for both sides, Van der Sterren-Winants, Netherlands 1992. **12.♕c2** White hopes in the future to attack the d5 pawn, whereas its exchange would enable Black to solve all his problems: 12.c4 h6 13.♗h4 ♘dxc5 14.cxd5 ♘c3 15.♕c2 ♘xd3 16.♕xd3 ♘xd5⇄. **12...♘xg5** Here too, 12...♕xc3? is bad because of 13.♗xe4, but 12...♘dxc5 was possible, e.g.: 13.♗e7 ♖e8 14.♗xc5 ♕xc5 15.c4 ♗e6 (15...♘f6 16.♖ac1±) 16.♘d4 ♘f6 17.♘xe6 ♖xe6 18.cxd5 ♕xd5 19.♗c4 ♕e4 20.♖ac1 ♕xc2 21.♖xc2 ♖c6 22.♖fc1 ♖ac8= Beinoras-Moiseenko, Ohrid 2009. **13.♘xg5 h6 14.♘f3** The assessment of the position is not changed by 14.♘h3 ♘xc5 15.♘f4 ♘e6 16.♘e2 ♗d7 17.♖fb1 ♗a4 18.♕d2 ♗c6 19.♖b4 ♖ac8⇄ Ward-Giorgadze, Hamburg 1995. **14...♘xc5 15.♘d4 ♗d7 16.♖fd1 ♖ac8=** Bu Xiangzhi-Jobava, Beer-Sheva 2005. The weakness of the isolated pawn on d5 is compensated for by the weakness of the c3 pawn, both sides' pieces are equally active, and the nominally 'bad' bishop on d7 is in reality not so bad, and does a lot of useful work in the centre and on the queenside.

9...♕a5

We will look at the move **9...♘xc5** in the game Morozevich-Movsesian.



10.♘d2!?

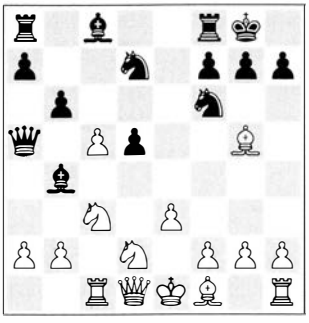
We will see the move **10.a3** later in the game Topalov-Carlsen.

10...b6!?

An aggressive plan, which was introduced into practice by the Georgian grandmasters Giorgy Kacheishvili and Giorgy Giorgadze. By sacrificing a pawn, Black opens his bishop's path to a6; this is very handy, if he can quickly open lines in the centre by playing ...d5-d4.

One can suggest **10...♕xc5** by way of a quieter alternative, after which Black obtains a somewhat passive, but perfectly solid position, e.g. **11.a3** 11.♘b3

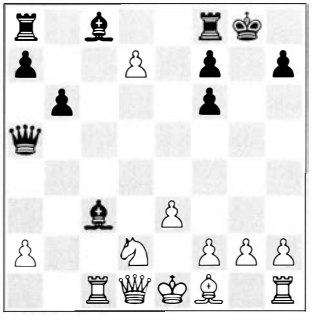
♕b6 12.♗d3 ♘e4 13.♗xe4 dxe4 14.0-0 ♕g6⇄ Sargissian-Grischuk, Mainz 2006. **11...♗xc3 12.♖xc3 ♕b6 13.♖b3 ♕e6 14.♗e2 ♘c5 15.♖b4 ♘fe4 16.♘xe4 dxe4±** Stocek-Carlsen, Germany Bundesliga 2006/07.



11.c6!

Only this move can pose Black definite problems. Little is promised by both **11.a3** ♗xc3 12.♖xc3 bxc5 13.♕c2 d4 14.♗xf6 dxc3 15.♗xc3 ♕b6 16.♗d3 h6 17.♕a4 ♕e6, Werle-Charbonneau, La Roche-sur-Yon 2006, and **11.♗e2** bxc5 12.0-0 ♗xc3 13.♖xc3 ♕xa2 14.♕c2 ♖b8 15.♖b1 ♕a5 16.♗xf6 ♘xf6 17.♘b3 draw, Grischuk-Carlsen, Moscow 2006.

11...d4! 12.cxd7 dxc3 13.bxc3 ♗xc3 14.♗xf6 gxf6



15.dxc8♕

Other moves have also been tried in this position, although they do not cause Black undue difficulties:

A) **15.♖xc3** ♕xc3 16.dxc8♕ ♖axc8 17.♗a6 ♖cd8 18.♔e2 ♖d6 19.♕c1 ♕a5 20.♗c4 ♖c8⇄ Moiseenko-Giorgadze, Sant Luis 2005;

B) **15.♗d3 ♗xd7 16.♖c2 ♖fd8 17.0-0 ♗xd2!** The knight is too dangerous a piece in the attack, especially taking account of the many holes in the black king position. **18.♖xd2 ♗f5 19.e4 ♗e6** But not 19...♗xe4?? 20.♗xe4 ♖xd2 21.♕g4+, and White wins the rook on a8. **20.e5 f5⇄** Bacrot-Carlsen, Cap d'Agde 2006;

C) **15.♕c2** ♗xd2+ 16.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 17.♔xd2 ♗xd7 18.♗a6 ♗e6 19.a3 ♖ad8+ 20.♔e2 ♖d5 with wonderful play for Black; he wants to play either ...♖a5, or simply to double rooks on the d-file, Lymar-Kacheishvili, Istanbul 2006.

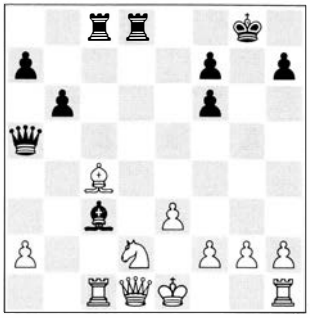
15...♖axc8 16.♗c4!

This idea of Tregubov's poses Black difficult problems. Previous practice had seen **16.♖c2 ♖fd8 17.♗d3**, but after 17...f5! (17...♖xd3? 18.♕g4+, and White takes the ♖c8 with check) 18.♕e2 ♕d5 Black obtains excellent counterchances: 19.0-0 ♕xd3 20.♕xd3 ♖xd3 21.♘b1 ♖c5 22.g3 ♗b4 23.♖xc5 ♗xc5 24.♔g2 ♔g7 25.♔f3 draw, Skembris-Drozdovsky, Bad Wörishofen 2008.

16...♖fd8

Of course, Black could immediate take back the piece with **16...♖xc4?!**, but after **17.0-0** he would have a difficult problem to solve: the white knight heads to f5 and the black king will feel extremely uncomfortable. Therefore

Black does better to take the knight, rather than the bishop.



17.♕g4+

Grandmaster Ruslan Scherbakov's suggestion **17.0-0!?** deserves consideration, e.g.: 17...♗xd2 18.♖c2 ♗xe3 19.♕f3 ♗d4 20.♗xf7+! ♔h8 21.♖e2 with somewhat the better chances for White.

17...♔f8 18.0-0 ♗xd2 19.♖c2

After 19.♖b1 Black would reply 19...♕a4!, forcing the exchange of queens. Now, however, 19...♕a4? fails to 20.♖xd2!.

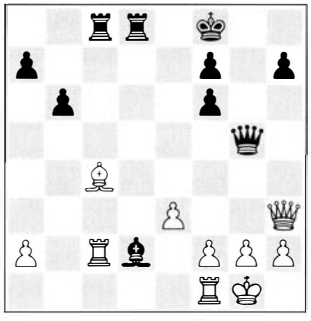
Black's pawn structure on the kingside is destroyed, as a result of which his king could come under attack at any moment. On the other hand, Black has placed his forces quite well, and controls a significant part of the board, as a result of which it is not easy for White to establish the coordination of his pieces.

19...♕g5?

This was a rapid game, and Black simply lacked the time to cope with such a sharp position. Correct was 19...b5!, exchanging a pair of rooks and at the same time significantly reducing White's attacking potential. After the possible 20.♗b3 ♖xc2 21.♗xc2 ♕xa2! 22.♕f5!? ♖d5 23.♕xh7 ♕c4 the position remains double-edged: Black's king is still weak, but his passed pawns are quite dangerous, and it is not easy for White to include his rook in the attack.

20.♕h3!

A double attack; one threat is obvious, but the other is slightly masked...



20...h6?

In meeting the obvious threat, Black falls for the trap. He had to play 20...b5! 21.♗b3 ♖xc2 22.♗xc2 h6 23.♕f3 ♕e5 24.♕b7±.

21.♖xd2!

White wins a piece.

21...♖xd2 22.♕xc8+ ♔g7 23.♕c7 ♕h5 24.h3 ♖c2 25.♗xf7! 1-0

Game 56
Topalov,Veselin
Carlsen,Magnus
Wijk aan Zee 2007

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 0-0 7.e3 c5 8.dxc5 ♘bd7 9.♖c1 ♕a5 10.a3!

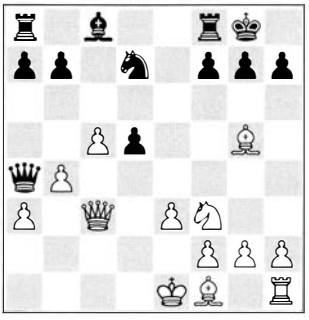


Everything old and forgotten is new! If one can believe the database, the modest text move, which changed the assessment of the whole variation, had only been seen once before this game, as far back as 1929!

10...♗xc3+ 11.♖xc3 ♘e4 12.b4 ♘xc3 13.♕a1 ♕a4

Black must land a series of blows against the white pawns as soon as possible, as they hang threateningly over his queenside. If he timidly retreats the queen with **13...♕c7**, then after **14.♕xc3** White finishes his development without problems and obtains the advantage. This is how events may unfold: **14...♖e8** 14...a5 15.♗b5! axb4 16.axb4 f6 17.♗f4 ♕d8 18.0-0± Ibarra Chami-Gongora Montes, Mexico 2008. The d5 pawn is weak, but the main thing is that Black has nothing to do. **15.♗e2 ♘e5** (Kempinski-Mchedlishvili, Dresden 2006) 15...♘f8 16.♗f4 ♕d8 17.♗e5 f6 18.♗g3 ♗g4 19.0-0± Nigalidze-Gelazonia, Tbilisi 2007. **16.♘xe5 ♕xe5 17.♕xe5 ♖xe5 18.♗f4 ♖e6 19.♔d2±** The pawn on c5 can be considered what Nimzowitsch in his day termed 'a candidate passed pawn'. The white bishops support it actively, whilst the black rooks lack open files and find it difficult to undertake anything. Other factors are also in White's favour: his king is very active and the d5 pawn is weak.

14.♕xc3

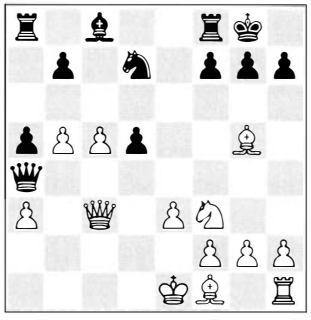


So, White has sacrificed the exchange, and what has he obtained by way of compensation? As well as a pawn, he has an excellent pawn structure (we have already mentioned the potential strength of the c5 pawn), two bishops, the weakness of d5, and an excellent blockading square on d4 for his knight. But his position also has its minuses, of course, the main one being his undeveloped kingside. Black must try, by energetic play, not hesitating to sacrifice material, to open lines for his pieces, so as to get at the white king in the centre.

14...a5

In reply to the preparatory move **14...♖e8** White should simply continue his development: **15.♗e2!?** 15.♗d3 a5 16.♗c2?! ♕b5 17.♘d4 axb4 18.♗xh7+ ♔h8 19.axb4 ♕c4 20.♕xc4 dxc4 21.♗b1 ♖a4 22.♔d2 ♖xb4∓ Kveinys-B. Socko, Karpacz 2008. **15...a5 16.b5 ♘f8 17.♘d4 ♘e6 18.♘xe6 ♖xe6 19.0-0 ♗d7 20.♕b2 ♖c8 21.♖c1 ♖g6 22.♗f4±** N.Kosintseva-Zdebskaja, Dresden 2007.

15.b5



15...♘xc5?!

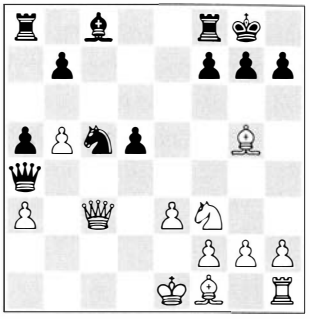
This sacrifice is very strong when the moves...h6 ♗h4 have been included (see the later game Aronian-Gelfand), but here, in my opinion, it is insufficient for equality.

Let us consider the alternative **15...b6 16.c6 ♘c5**. The black knight gets the excellent post c5, but he has had to pay a high price for this – the protected passed pawn on c6 is very dangerous. Here White has several tempting possibilities:

A) **17.♗d3** ♕g4?! (17...♗g4!? 18.0-0 ♘e6 19.♗e7 ♖fe8 20.♗d6 ♗xf3 21.gxf3 ♖ad8⇄) 18.0-0 ♘xd3 19.♕xd3 ♗f5 20.♕e2 ♗e4 21.♗f4 d4 22.♗g3 d3 23.♕d2 ♗xf3 24.gxf3 ♕c4 25.♖c1 ♕xb5 26.c7 ♖ac8 27.♖c3± Khenkin-Maze, Geneve 2007;

B) **17.♗f4!?** ♗g4 18.♗e2 (18.♗c7? d4! 19.♕xd4 ♕xa3 20.♕xg4 ♕c1+ 21.♔e2 ♕b2+ 22.♘d2 ♘e6∓) 18...♘e6 19.♗e5 ♖fe8 20.0-0±;

C) **17.♗e2** One has the impression that this straightforward developing move is the strongest. **17...♖e8 18.0-0 ♗g4 19.♗d1!** This is the time to disturb the black queen! **19...♘e4** 19...♕xb5? 20.♘d4, and White wins a piece. **20.♕b2 ♕c4 21.♗e2 ♕c5** After 21...♕a4 22.♖d1 Black loses the key pawn on d5, after which his position collapses. **22.♖c1 ♕d6 23.♗f4 ♕e7 24.h3 ♗h5 25.♖d1±** Bacrot-Kortchnoi, Novi Sad 2009.



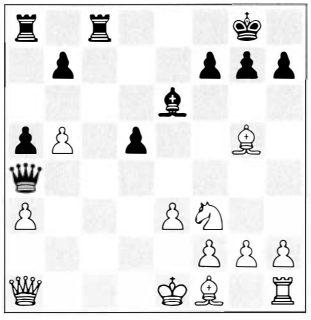
16.♕xc5 ♗e6?

A strange move: Black has just sacrificed a piece, and now he defends a pawn, which White would not take even if one held a pistol to his head, because he does not want to open lines for the enemy rooks. It is clear that Black should have chosen between 16...♗d7 and 16...♗f5. Topalov later expressed the opinion that the strongest move was **16...♗d7**. White has several promising continuations in reply: **17.♗e2** 17.♕c1!? ♖ac8 18.♕a1 ♗xb5 19.♘d4 ♗xf1 20.♖xf1 ♖fe8 21.♔d2 f6 22.♗f4 (Laznicka-Smerdon, Pardubice 2007) 22...♖c4 23.♖d1 b5 24.♕b2±. **17...♖fc8** 17...♖ac8 18.♕xd5 ♗e6 19.♕d2 ♕xa3 20.0-0±. **18.♕xd5 ♖c1+ 19.♗d1 ♗xb5 20.♔d2 ♕xa3 21.♕xb5 ♕a2+ 22.♔e1±**.

In reply to **16...♗f5** it makes sense to tuck the white queen in the corner, away from all attacks: **17.♕c1!? ♖fc8 18.♕a1** White only needs to play ♗e2 and 0-0, and, if he has time, ♘d4, to be 100% happy. Black should try to disrupt the natural course of the game – **18...♗b1!? 19.♕xb1 ♕xa3 20.♔d2!** One cannot help recalling Steinitz's aphorism that the king is a strong piece,

who can defend himself. **20...♕b4+ 21.♕xb4 axb4 22.♗e2** White must give up one of his minor pieces, but he retains a small material advantage. **22...♖a2+ 23.♔d3 ♖c3+ 24.♔d4 ♖xe2 25.♖b1 ♖xf2 26.♖xb4** All of White's pieces have been activated, and his main trump is the pawn b5, which is close to the queening square. **26...♖cc2 27.♔xd5 ♖xg2 28.♗f4±** Lysyj-Nakhapetiane, Moscow 2010.

17.♕c1! ♖fc8 18.♕a1



We have already seen this plan in the game Lysyj-Nakhapetiane (although chronologically, of course, the main game was played first, and Topalov was the first to demonstrate the plan): White tucks his queen in the corner and tries to complete his development, after which his material advantage will be decisive.

18...♕c2 19.♗e2 ♕c1+ 20.♕xc1 ♖xc1+ 21.♗d1

So as to break through to the back rank, Black has had to exchange queens.

21...♖a1

In the variation 21...♖ac8 22.♘d4 ♖a1 23.♗e7 ♖c7 24.♗d6 ♖d7 25.♗e5 ♖xa3 26.b6± the pawn on b6 assumes great significance, and in addition, White wins the battle for the c-file.

22.a4

White has everything defended, and under control. All that remains is to bring the king's rook into play, after which the outcome of the game will be decided.

22...♖c8 23.♘d4 ♖c4 24.0-0 f6

A year later, the position after White's 24th move arose in a game between two German players. Black deviated, but did not last much longer: 24...♖b1 25.♗d8 ♖cc1 26.♗e2 ♖xf1+ 27.♗xf1 ♖a1 28.♗xa5 ♖xa4 29.♗c7 ♖a2 30.♘xe6 fxe6 31.f4+– Reich-Kabatianski, Germany Bundesliga 2008/09. It is clear that Black needs to seek an improvement earlier.

25.♗f4 ♗f7 26.h4

White's position is technically winning, and Black did not bother stringing it out, resigning at once.

Game 57
Morozevich,Alexander
Movsesian,Sergey
Sarajevo 2007

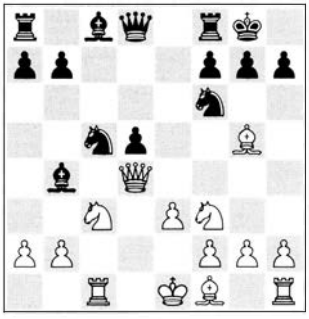
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 0-0 7.e3 c5 8.dxc5 ♘bd7 9.♖c1 ♘xc5!?



Black does not try to force events by immediately attacking c3, but just continues his development. Evidently, Movsesian considers that the activity of his pieces compensates for the IQP.

10.♗d3

This move of Morozevich's has not found any followers, not, I think, because of its objective strength or weakness, but because of the result of the game. The usual continuation here is **10.♕d4**, after which White is slightly better, but Black has enough resources to maintain the balance:



Analysis diagram

10...♗xc3+ 10...a5!? 11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.♕xf6 gxf6 (Wojtaszek-Bartel, Opole 2007) 13.♘d4! a4 14.a3 ♗a5 15.♗b5±. **11.♕xc3 ♘ce4 12.♗xf6 ♘xf6** 12...♕xf6 13.♕xf6 ♘xf6 14.♗d3 ♗d7 15.♘d4 ♖fc8 16.♔e2 ♔f8 17.f3± Ioseliani-Chiburdanidze, Telavi 1988. **13.♗e2** 13.♗d3 ♗g4 14.0-0 ♖c8 15.♕d4 ♗xf3 16.gxf3 ♕b6 17.♕xb6 axb6 18.a4 g6 19.♖fd1 ♖fd8 20.♔f1 ♔f8 21.♔e2 draw, Shulman-Zviagintsev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005. **13...♗g4 14.0-0 ♕b6 15.h3 ♖fc8 16.♕d2** 16.♕d4 ♗xf3 17.♕xb6 axb6 18.♗xf3 ♔f8 19.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 20.♖d1 ♖c2 21.♗xd5 ♘xd5 22.♖xd5 ♖xb2 23.♖d8+ ♔e7 24.♖b8 ♖xa2 25.♖xb7+ ♔f8 26.♖xb6 h5 – White tried for another 35 moves to win this theoretically drawn position, but without success, Bacrot-Movsesian, Wijk aan Zee 2008. **16...♗e6 17.♕d4 ♘d7 18.♖fd1 h6 19.♕xb6 ♘xb6 20.♘d4 ♖xc1 21.♖xc1 ♖c8 22.♖b1 ♘c4 23.g4 ♘e5 24.♗b5 a6 25.♗a4 b5 26.♗b3 ♘c6** – if one can speak of an advantage for White at all, it is purely theoretical, Bacrot-Koneru, Wijk aan Zee 2008.



10...♗g4!?

Black completes his development, and, pinning the knight on f3, strengthens the threat of ...d5-d4. It looks as though the following is also sufficient for equality: **10...h6 11.♗xf6** 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♘fe4⇄. **11...♕xf6 12.0-0 ♗e6⇄**.

Undoubtedly, the immediate central blow also needs to be tested: **10...d4!? 11.♘xd4** 11.♗xf6? dxc3! 12.♗xd8 c2+ 13.♔e2 cxd1♕+ 14.♖hxd1 ♘xd3 15.♖xd3 b6∓; 11.exd4 ♘xd3+ 12.♕xd3 ♖e8+ 13.♗e3 ♗g4⩲. **11...♕d5 12.♗xf6 ♕xg2 13.♖f1 gxf6 14.♔d2 ♔h8** with a very sharp position.

11.0-0 ♗xf3

After **11...♗xc3? 12.♖xc3 ♘ce4 13.♗xe4 dxe4 14.♕xd8 ♖fxd8 15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.♘d4** Black obtains a very unpleasant ending with a bad

bishop and weak pawns.

12.gxf3 ♗xc3

Black needs to think about the d5 pawn; after **12...♘e6?** 13.♗xf6 ♕xf6 14.♘xd5 ♕g5+ 15.♔h1 the knight is invulnerable because of 16.♗xh7+, winning the queen.

13.♖xc3 ♘e6 14.♗h4 d4 15.♖c4



We have reached a fairly non-standard position, in which White's chances are preferable, in my opinion. The two bishops in an open position are a real force, and the black knights lack stable outposts in the centre. The drawback of White's position is his somewhat vulnerable king, but if he manages to exchange queens, then he will be able to forget about this problem.

15...b5 16.♖c2

A subtle move: from here, the rook defends the queenside and after the exchange on e3, it will be able to transfer to the other flank quickly.

16...dxe3 17.fxe3 ♕b6 18.♗xf6

Grandmaster Postny recommends keeping the important e3 pawn: 18.♕d2! ♘d5 (or 18...♖ad8 19.♗xf6 gxf6 20.♔h1±) 19.♖e1 ♘df4 20.♗f5±. However, Morozevich's more concrete move is far from bad.

18...♕xe3+ 19.♔h1 gxf6 20.♖e2 ♕h6 21.♗xb5 ♔h8 22.♗c4 ♖ad8 23.♕c1

A very human decision: White asks his opponent whether he wants to enter a somewhat worse, although probably defensible endgame.

The computer is full of ideas here, and even promises White an advantage in such a wild variation as 23.♕e1 ♘d4 24.♖e4 ♘f5 25.♖g1 ♖d2 26.♖e2. But it is too risky to invite the enemy rook to the second rank, especially when one is in time-trouble!

23...♕h3

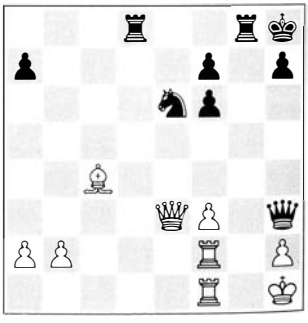
A sensible decision: Black's queen is very actively posted, and in conjunction with the knight, it can work wonders.

24.♖ef2

Useful prophylaxis: now the rook at f1 is defended three times, and the f3 pawn twice. Botvinnik in his day recommended that in time-trouble, one should play so that one's pieces defend one another.

24...♖g8 25.♕e3??

A terrible blunder, losing the game, although its refutation is far from obvious. Correct was 25.♕c3 ♕h4 26.♗xe6 fxe6 with mutual chances.



25...♘g7!

The knight joins the attack with decisive effect – the unfortunate position of the queen on e3 allows Black to win a very important tempo.

26.♖g1

Neither 26.♗xf7 ♘f5, nor 26.♕c3 ♘h5 help.

26...♘f5 27.♕e1 ♖xg1+ 28.♔xg1

Allowing an effective finish. In the variation 28.♕xg1 ♖g8 29.♖g2 ♖xg2 30.♕xg2 ♕xg2+ 31.♔xg2 ♘e3+ Black simply wins a piece.

28...♖g8+ 29.♔h1 ♘g3+! 30.♔g1 ♘f1+ 31.♔h1 ♘xh2!

White resigned because of unavoidable mate.

Game 58
Laznicka,Viktor
Sargissian,Gabriel
Germany Bundesliga 2006/07

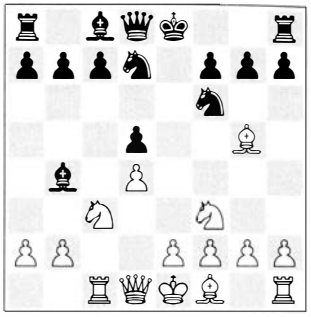
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 ♘bd7

This move was once regarded as just about obligatory, but these days it is only second in popularity, behind **6...h6**, whilst the move **6...0-0**, which we have already seen, also has plenty of adherents.

The idea of the knight move is to reinforce the knight on f6, so to bring the queen to the queenside as soon as possible with ...c7-c5 and ...♕a5.

7.♖c1

The main continuation here is 7.e3, to which we will return, but the text move also has a sound positional basis. White strengthens the square c3 and retains the possibility of bringing the bishop back to d2 if necessary. Admittedly, though, the development of the kingside pieces is somewhat delayed.



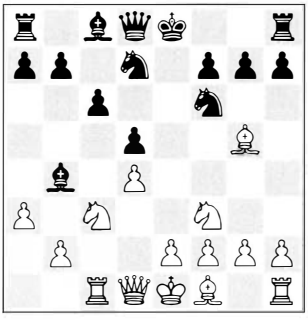
7...c6

A solid move: Black reinforces the d5 pawn and underlines the not altogether ideal position of the white rook on c1. Here, it looks less well-founded to play **7...c5 8.dxc5 ♕a5** 8...0-0 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.♖xc3 h6 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.♕d4 ♘e4 13.♖c1 ♕a5+ 14.♕b4 with advantage to White, Vallejo Pons-Aronian, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005; we have already seen this game), because the bishop can indeed now return – **9.♗d2** Less convincing is 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.♖xc3 ♘e4 11.♗d2 ♘dxc5 (11...♘xc3?! 12.♗xc3 ♕xc5 13.♗xg7 ♖g8 14.♗d4 ♕d6 15.g3 ♘b6 16.♗g2± Donoso-Endara, Pichincha 1962) 12.♖c1 ♘xd2 13.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 14.♘xd2 b6 15.e3 ♔e7 16.b4 ♘e6 17.♘b3 a5, and Black held this endgame without great trouble, Navara-Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2006. **9...♗xc5 10.e3 ♕d8 11.♕b3 0-0 12.♘xd5 b6**

13.♗c4 ♘e4 14.♕c2± Khuzman-Dizdar, Baku 1988.

8.e3

Statistically, **8.a3!?** is most often played here, in order to determine the position of the bishop at once.

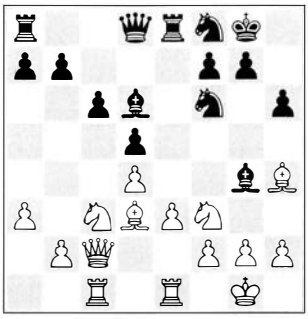


Analysis diagram

Black has a good choice then: both the exchange on c2, and the retreat to d6 usually allow him to obtain fully adequate play:

A) **8...♗xc3+ 9.♖xc3 0-0 10.e3 ♕e8** This is a rather 'King's Indian' method of escaping from the pin; Black can also play in more standard fashion: 10...h6 11.♗f4 ♘e4 12.♖c1 g5 13.♗g3 ♘df6 14.♗d3 ♕a5+ 15.♘d2 ♗f5⇄ Karjakin-Movsesian, Moscow 2008. **11.♗f4 ♘e4 12.♖c2 ♘df6 13.♘e5 ♕e7 14.♗d3 ♘e8 15.h3 f6 16.♘f3 ♘8d6⇄** Bocharov-Vitiugov, Plovdiv 2008;

B) **8...♗d6 9.e3 0-0** Another typical plan also deserves consideration – the transfer of the knight to g6, before castling: 9...♘f8 10.♗d3 ♘g6 11.♕c2 ♗e6 12.♘h4 0-0 13.♘e2 h6 14.♘xg6 fxg6 15.♘f4 ♗xf4 16.♗xf4 g5 17.♗g3 ♘e4⇄ Esen-Vitiugov, Bursa 2010. **10.♗d3 ♖e8 11.0-0 ♘f8 12.♖e1 h6 13.♗h4 ♗g4 14.♕c2**



Analysis diagram

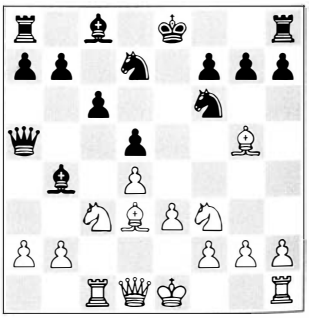
14...♗h5 Yet another standard plan: Black transfers the bishop to g6, to exchange light-squared bishops. **15.♗g3 ♗xg3 16.hxg3 ♗g6 17.♗xg6 ♘xg6 18.♘e2 ♘e4⇄** Ivanchuk-Morozevich, Leon 2009.

8...♕a5

Typical Carlsbad play arises after **8...0-0** 9.♗d3 ♖e8 10.0-0 ♗e7 (the more active move 10...♗d6 is also played) 11.♕c2 ♘f8 12.h3 ♗e6 13.♘a4 ♘e4 14.♗xe7 ♖xe7 15.b4 ♖c8 16.♘c5 ♘xc5 17.♕xc5 a6 18.a4 ♖ec7 19.♕c2 ♕f6 20.♘e5 ♕g5 21.♔h1 ♕h5 – White stands slightly more actively, but Black has a very solid position, Riazantsev-Lastin, Ulan Ude 2009.

9.♕b3

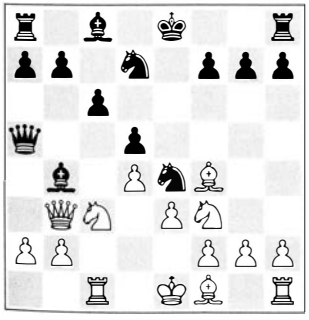
A new gambit has been born before our very eyes over the last couple of years: **9.♗d3**



9...♕xa2!? White has a small advantage after 9...♘e4 10.0-0 ♘xg5 11.♘xg5 ♘f6 12.♕c2 h6 13.♘f3 ♗d6 14.h3 0-0 15.♘e5± Gelfand-Yakovenko, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009. White has a very well-placed knight on e5, and Black will have to lose time retreating his queen. **10.0-0 ♕a5 11.♘e5 ♘xe5** 11...0-0 12.♕f3 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♘g4 14.♕g3 ♘xe5 15.♕xe5 f6 16.♗xf6 ♖xf6 17.♕e8+ ♖f8 18.♕h5 h6 19.♕g6 ♖f6 20.♕e8+ draw, Navara-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2007. **12.dxe5 ♘g4 13.♗f4 f6 14.e4** 14.exf6 ♘xf6 15.♕b3 ♗xc3 16.bxc3 0-0 draw, Riazantsev-Halkias, Rijeka 2010. **14...fxe5 15.♗g3 ♗xc3 16.♖xc3 d4 17.♖a3 ♕c5 18.♕d2 0-0 19.h3 ♘h6 20.♖a5 b5 21.♖c1 ♕d6 22.♕c2⩲** Anand-Short, Wijk aan Zee 2010.

9...♘e4 10.♗f4

In a number of games, White has agreed to exchange his dark-squared bishop, but this has not brought him any great joy: **10.♗d3** ♘xg5 11.♘xg5 ♘f6 12.0-0 0-0 13.h3 (13.a3 ♗d6 14.♕c2 h6 15.♘h7 ♘xh7 16.♗xh7+ ♔h8 17.♗f5 ♕d8 18.♘a4 ♕h4 19.g3 ♕e7 20.♗xc8 ♖axc8⇄ Lauber-Landa, Germany Bundesliga 2009/10) 13...♖e8 14.♖fe1 h6 15.♘f3 ♕b6 16.♕c2 ♗d6 17.a3 ♕d8 18.♘d2 ♗d7 19.♘a4 b6 20.♘c3 ♖c8⇄ Wang Yue-Elianov, Elista 2008.



10...c5!

The most energetic continuation: Black immediately starts a battle for the initiative in the centre and on the queenside.

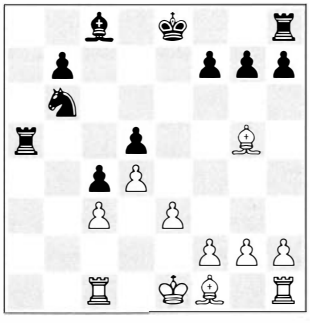
11.a3 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 c4 13.♕b4 ♕xb4 14.axb4 a5 15.bxa5 ♖xa5 16.♘g5?!

Of course, White cannot tolerate the knight on e4 for long, but it is better to exchange it in such a way as to bring the king nearer to the centre: 16.♘d2 ♘xd2 17.♔xd2 ♘f6 18.f3 ♗f5 19.e4 ♖a2+ 20.♔e3 dxe4 (20...♗g6 21.♗e2 0-0 22.♖a1 ♖c2 23.♖hc1 ♖xc1 24.♖xc1 dxe4 25.♗xc4± Mamedyarov-Halkias, Bursa 2010) 21.♗xc4 ♖xg2 22.♗e5 exf3 23.♗xf6 gxf6 24.♔xf3 ♖b2⇄ Rogozenko-Landa, Germany Bundesliga 2009/10.

16...♘xg5

White fell into an interesting trap in the following game: 16...b5 17.♗e2? (this natural move loses immediately; he should exchange knights with 17.♘xe4 dxe4, but after 18.♗e2 ♔e7 Black is also fine) 17...♘xc3! 18.♖xc3 ♖a1+ 19.♗d1 b4 20.♖c2 b3 21.♖e2 c3 22.0-0 b2 23.♗c2 ♗a6 with a decisive advantage, Esen-Paikidze, Ankara 2010.

17.♗xg5 ♘b6!



The start of the correct strategic plan, the aim of which is to achieve a breakthrough on the queenside.

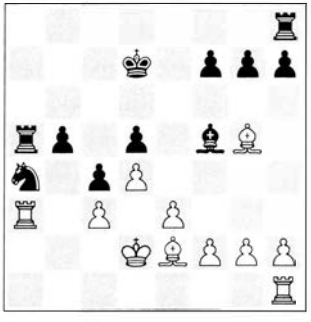
18.♖b1 ♘a4 19.♔d2 b5 20.♗e2?

As Grandmaster Deviatkin pointed out, White should have played 20.f3!, and if 20...♗f5, then 21.e4! dxe4 (21...♗g6!?) 22.♗xc4! e3+ 23.♗xe3 ♗xb1 24.♖xb1 ♘b6 (24...bxc4 25.♖b8+) 25.♗xb5+ ♔e7 26.♔d3 with more than sufficient compensation for the exchange.

20...♗f5 21.♖a1

After 21.♖b4 there would follow 21...♘b6 22.♖c1 ♔d7 with the idea ...♔c6 and ...♖ha8. Black strengthens the pawn on b5 and prepares active operations on the queenside.

21...♔d7 22.♖a3



22...♘c5!

With the help of a small tactic, Black escapes from the pin and wins the battle for the a-file.

23.♖xa5

23.♖ha1 does not work because of 23...♘e4+, and White loses a bishop.

23...♘b3+ 24.♔d1 ♘xa5 25.♔c1

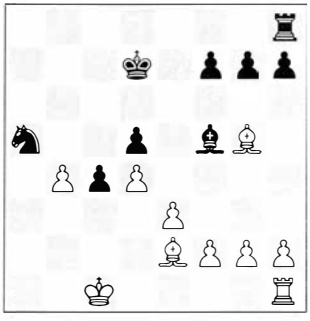
The white rook cannot get to a1, since after 25.♔d2 there would follow 25...♘b3+, and the king has to return to the first rank.

25...b4!

Black obtains a dangerous passed pawn, which will be supported by all of his pieces.

26.cxb4

The most stubborn is 26.♔b2 ♖b8 27.♗d1!, but after 27...♘c6! with the threats of ...b3 and ...♖a8 or ...bxc3+ and ...♘b4, White still has a difficult position.



26...♖b8!

The simple but elegant blow ends the game quickly.

27.♗d1

Obviously, the knight cannot be taken – 27.bxa5 ♖b1+. Nor does 27.♔d2 ♖xb4 28.♖a1 ♖b2+ 29.♔e1 ♘b3 save the game.

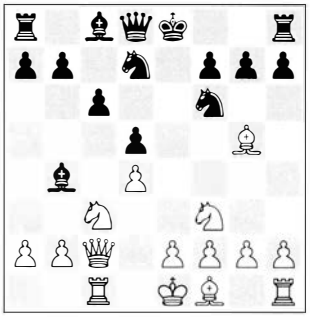
27...♖xb4 28.♗c2 ♘b3+ 29.♔d1 ♗d3!

The most precise; now the white king comes under fire.

30.♖e1 ♖a4 31.♗xb3 cxb3 32.♔d2 b2! 0-1

Game 59
Carlsen,Magnus
Grischuk,Alexander
Nice 2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 ♘bd7 7.♖c1 c6 8.♕c2



A rare move, the point of which is not immediately obvious. In any scenario, White needs to develop his kingside, whereas it is not yet clear where the queen will be best – on d1, c2 or somewhere else. One can only assume that with his last move, Carlsen wanted to provoke his opponent into undertaking something active. The idea evidently worked.

8...h6

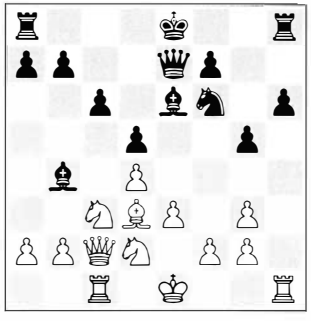
Of course, as well as a pawn offensive on the kingside, Black can also play the more 'fundamental' **8...0-0**. For example, in the following game, the players fairly quickly reached a drawish position: 9.e3 ♕a5 10.a3 ♗xc3+ 11.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♘e4 13.c4 dxc4 14.♗xc4 ♘b6 15.♗d3 ♖e8 16.♗xe4 ♖xe4 17.♘d2 ♖e8 18.0-0 f6 draw, Epishin-Milov, Bratto 2003.

9.♗h4 g5 10.♗g3 ♘e4 11.♘d2 ♘df6 12.e3 ♘xg3

In the opinion of grandmaster Nunn, the direct **12...♘xd2 13.♕xd2 ♘e4 14.♕c2 h5 15.f3 ♘xg3 16.hxg3 ♗e6** etc. equalises more easily.

13.hxg3 ♕e7 14.♗d3 ♗e6

The database has an earlier game, which reached the same position via a different move-order. After **14...♔f8** 15.♗f5 ♔g7 16.♗xc8 ♖axc8 17.a3 ♗xc3 18.♕xc3 h5 19.♕c2 ♕e6 Black obtained good play, Komljenovic-Campos Moreno, Naron 1993.



15.a3 ♗d6

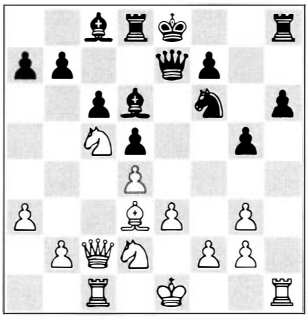
Black has the two bishops and a space advantage on the kingside. True, he has weakened f5, but this will only be a real problem if White manages to get one of his knights there. For the moment, both steeds are located well away from this square.

16.♘a4 ♖d8?!

'Perhaps Black's biggest problem is to find a place for his king. The move in the game deprives him of the possibility of castling queenside, but this seems logical, since White's main plan is ♘c5, b4 and a later advance of the queenside pawns. Even so, I think it was better to play 16...0-0-0!. After 17.♘c5 ♔b8 18.b4 ♗c8 Black has a

perfectly solid position on the queenside, and is now ready to create counterplay on the other wing, by advancing the h-pawn' – Nunn in New In Chess 2010/3.

17.♘c5 ♗c8



18.b4?!

In Nunn's opinion, White has a slight advantage after **18.♘f3**. Indeed, after 18...g4 the reply 19.♘h4 is unpleasant, and in the event of 18...♘g4 19.♗f5! Black has problems with his kingside (19...♔f8? 20.♗xc8 ♖xc8 21.♕f5 or 19...0-0 20.♗xg4 ♗xg4 21.♖xh6). However, it is worth considering 18...0-0!? with the idea of 19.♖xh6 g4! 20.♘h4 ♗xg3!, creating favourable complications.

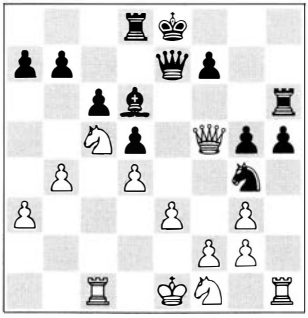
18...♘g4!

Creating the unpleasant threat of 19...♗xg3.

19.♘f1 h5

'A lot depends on whether Black can keep his knight on g4. If he can, then it will be difficult for White to count on an advantage, but if the knight moves away, then Black's activity dwindles to nothing and he is left with weaknesses in his position' – Nunn.

20.♗f5 ♗xf5 21.♕xf5 ♖h6



As usual, Grischuk plays very concretely. With his last move, Black has created the unpleasant threat of 22...♗xc5 23.bxc5 ♖f6 24.♕xg5 ♘xf2.

22.♖c2!

Carlsen is as inventive as his opponent: with his last move, White not only defends the f2 pawn, but also himself creates a masked positional threat...

22...a5?

... which Black does not see. He should have played 22...♔f8!, taking the king off the x-ray on the e-file.

23.f3!

This is the point: now Black cannot take twice on e3, because after ♖e2 he loses the queen.

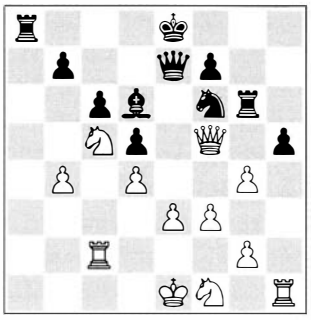
23...♘f6 24.♕xg5 ♖g6 25.♕f5 axb4 26.axb4 ♖a8

After 26...♗xg3+ 27.♘xg3 ♖xg3 the black queen is overloaded and White wins by 28.♘xb7 ♕xb7 29.♕xf6.

27.g4!?

It was better first to move the king off the first rank, so as in various lines to

deprive the opponent of a check on a1. However, Carlsen is a subtle psychologist and, on the contrary, he provokes his opponent to give this check.



27...♖a1+?

Falling in with the opponent's idea. Instead, after the cold-blooded 27...hxg4! 28.♖h8+ ♘g8 there seems to be no decisive continuation for White. For example, 29.♕xg6? is simply bad because of 29...♖a1+ (it was precisely so that there would not be such intermediary checks that I suggested moving the king off the back rank).

28.♔e2

White does not fall for the elementary trap 28.♔f2? ♘xg4+.

28...♗xc5

Here after 28...hxg4, instead of the check on h8 it is much stronger to play 29.♕c8+ ♕d8 30.♘xb7! winning.

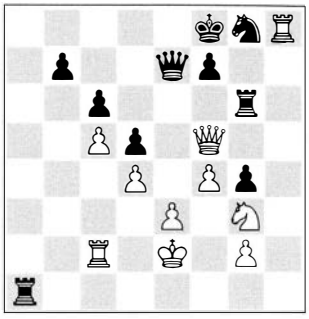
29.bxc5 hxg4

More tenacious is 29...♕e6, although even in this case, after 30.♕f4 hxg4 31.♖h8+ ♔d7 32.♘g3 gxf3+ 33.gxf3 ♘e8 Black's position is extremely unpleasant.

30.♖h8+ ♘g8 31.f4

'Material is equal, but Black faces serious problems. The white queen and rook on c8 occupy dominating positions, whilst the knight can easily come to g3 and then, after the queen moves, to f5' – Nunn.

31...♔f8 32.♘g3



32...♖e6? 33.♕xg4 ♖g6

He also loses after 33...♖xe3+ 34.♔f2 ♖f3+ 35.gxf3! ♕e1+ 36.♔g2 ♕g1+ 37.♔h3, and the white king escapes the checks.

34.♕c8+ ♕e8 35.♕xe8+ ♔xe8 36.♔f3 ♔d7 37.♖b2 ♔c7 38.♖h7 ♘h6 39.♘f5 ♖f1+ 40.♖f2 ♖xf2+ 41.♔xf2

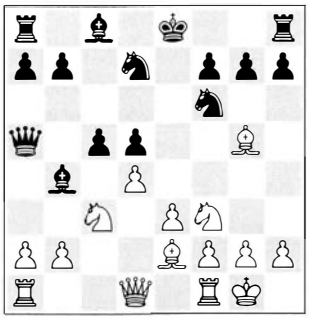
Black resigned.

Game 60
Morozevich,Alexander
Aronian,Levon
Morelia/Linares 2007

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 ♘bd7 7.e3 c5 8.♗e2

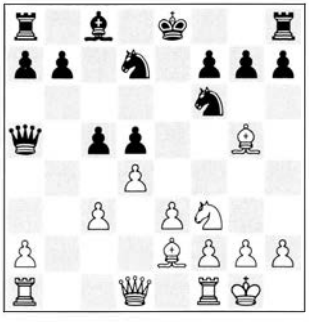
The popular alternatives **8.♗d3** and **8.dxc5** will be examined later.

8...♕a5 9.0-0



9...0-0

The most consequent move here is **9...♗xc3 10.bxc3** The intermediate exchange on f6 promises little, since in this case, Black has no problems with his development: 10.♗xf6 ♘xf6 11.bxc3 c4 12.♕c2 0-0 13.♘e5 ♘d7 14.e4 ♘xe5 15.dxe5 ♗e6 16.exd5 ♗xd5⇄ Romanov-Alexandrov, Budva 2009.



Analysis diagram

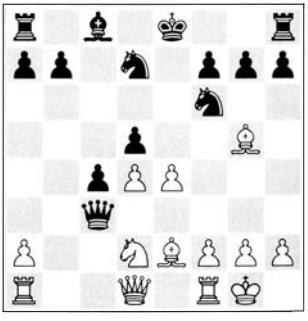
The pawn on c3 is poisoned: 10...♕xc3? 11.♖c1 ♕a3 12.dxc5±.

Black wants to play ...c4 and ...♘e4, gradually establishing a blockade on the light squares. With which of these moves should he start? Each has its plusses and minuses.

A) **10...c4 11.♘d2!?** White immediately takes control of the e4-square. After 11.♕c2 ♘e4 White has to spend a tempo defending the c3 pawn. Then Black can exchange the knight for the bishop and transfer his second knight to the square e4, also opening the path for his bishop on c8: 12.♖fc1 ♘xg5 13.♘xg5 ♘f6 14.e4 – essential, otherwise Black plays ...h6, ...♘e4 and continues his light-square strategy – 14...h6 15.♘f3 ♘xe4 16.♗xc4 0-0 17.♗d3 ♘d6 18.♘e5 ♗e6 19.f4 f5⇄ I.Sokolov-Efimenko, Rijeka 2010. But here is a quite recent game, in which the white knight demonstrated surprising agility: 12.♖ac1 – instead of 12.♖fc1 – 12...b5 13.♗f4 ♗b7 14.♘e5 ♘b6 15.f3 ♘d6 16.♘c6! ♕a3 17.♘a5! ♗c8 18.e4 ♗d7 19.♗xd6 ♕xd6 20.♘b7! ♕f4 21.♘c5 ♗c6 22.e5± Hammer-Alexandrov, Dubai 2011.

11...♕xc3 The pawn sacrifice has to be accepted, otherwise White defends it, having been able to strengthen his control of e4, and he has a stable advantage: 11...0-0 12.♕c2 ♖e8 13.a4 h6 14.♗h4 ♘e4 15.♘xe4 ♖xe4 16.♗g3 ♘b6 17.♗d6 ♖e8 18.♗b4 ♕a6 19.♗f3± K. Bischoff-Smerdon, Queenstown 2009.

12.e4



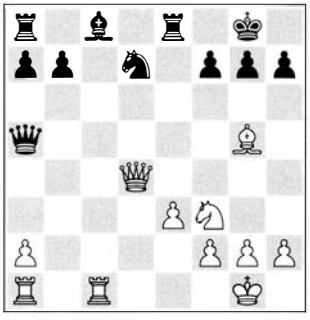
Analysis diagram

The position looks dangerous for Black, since he is seriously behind in development, and White has already advanced in the centre. But these days, computers have practically done away with assess-

ments such as 'dangerous'; with their help, it is possible to establish precisely, is Black holding or not?

12...♘xe4 12...♕xd4 is also possible, after which White goes into a slightly better endgame, but Black is perfectly able to hold it: 13.♘xc4 ♕xd1 14.♘d6+ ♔e7 15.♘f5+ ♔f8 16.♖fxd1 ♘c5 17.♗xf6 gxf6 18.♖xd5 ♗xf5 19.♖xf5 ♘xe4 20.♗f3 ♖e8 21.♖f4 ♘c5 22.♖xf6 ♔g7 23.♖f5 b6⇄ Ragger-Luther, Austria 2009/10. **13.♘xe4 dxe4 14.♖c1 ♕a5** In many variations of the Westphalia, the bishop on g5 comes under attack, thanks to which Black wins precious tempi. **15.♗d2 ♕f5** Probably this is the most principled move, since on f5 the queen is quite actively placed, but in my opinion, 15...♕b6 is more solid, not allowing the enemy bishop to b4. So far, White has not been able to pose Black serious problems: 16.♖xc4 0-0 17.d5 ♕g6 18.♗b4 ♘e5 19.♖c3 ♖d8 20.♗e7 ♖e8⇄ Y. Vovk-Onischuk, Alushta 2009. **16.♖xc4** A very sharp position arises after 16.♗b4!? a5 17.♗a3 b5 18.f3 ♕g5⇄ Kazhgaleev-Emelin, St. Petersburg 2009. White is two pawns down, but the enemy king is stuck in the centre and can come under attack. **16...0-0 17.♕c2 ♕g6** 17...♘b6 18.♖c5 ♕g6 19.♖g5 ♕c6 20.♖c5 ♕g6 21.♖g5 ♕c6 22.♖c5 draw, Giri-Ivanchuk, Hoogeveen 2009. **18.♗f4 ♘b6 19.♖c5 ♗f5⇄** Grischuk-Sargissian, Mainz 2009;

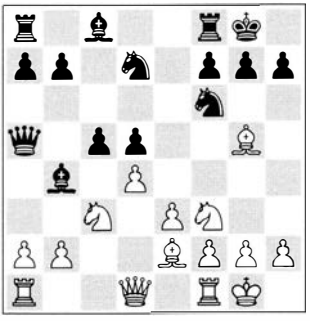
B) **10...♘e4 11.c4!** Here White has the chance to prevent the blockading move ...c5-c4. **11...♘c3** Black should exercise caution and try to simplify the position. After 11...dxc4 12.♗xc4 cxd4 13.♗h4! dxe3 (13...0-0 14.♕xd4 ♘df6 15.h3± Van Tilbury-Ibarra Chami, Dresden 2008) 14.♕d4 exf2+ 15.♖xf2! White gets through to the enemy king. **12.♕c2 ♘xe2+ 13.♕xe2 dxc4 14.♕xc4 cxd4 15.♕xd4 0-0 16.♖fc1** Thanks to his advantage in development, White holds a small initiative, but Black has many defensive resources. **16...♖e8!**



Analysis diagram

17.♖xc8!? After 17.h3 ♘f8! 18.♗h4 b6=; or 17.♗f4 ♘f8 Black has good chances to equalise. It is tempting, of course, to win two pieces for a rook, but Black also picks up the pawn on a2. **17...♖exc8 18.♕xd7 ♕xa2! 19.♖d1 a5⇄** The connected passed pawns promise Black sufficient play, Deviatkin-Vovk, Saratov 2007.

Back to the game.

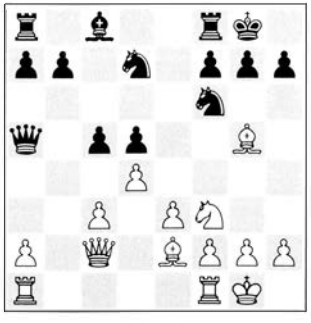


10.♘d2!?

This move was introduced into practice by Alexander Morozevich in the present game. White invites his opponent to help himself to the c3 pawn, in order to open the game and seize the initiative, thanks to his superior development.

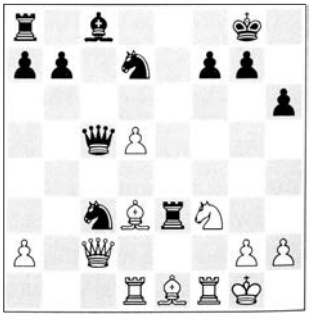
In the 1980s, White tried the temporary sacrifice **10.♘xd5!?** in a couple of games, incidentally winning both. But Black should be fine here: **10...♘xd5 11.a3** (Komljenovic-Lazarov, Ruse 1984) 11.dxc5 h6 12.♗h4 ♘7f6 13.a3 ♗xc5 14.b4 (Adorjan-Vl.Kovacevic, Sarajevo 1983) 14...♗xb4 15.axb4 ♕xb4⇄. **11...♗c3! 12.bxc3 ♘xc3 13.♕d2 ♘xe2+ 14.♕xe2 b6⇄**

Currently, the main line here is **10.♕c2 ♗xc3** Black can defend a slightly inferior position after 10...cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♖e8, e.g.: 13.♗f4 ♘e5 14.♖ab1 a6 15.♗xe5 ♖xe5 16.♖fc1 ♕c7 17.c4 dxc4 18.♕xc4 ♕xc4 19.♖xc4± Ivanchuk-Ponomariov, Moscow 2009. It is worth considering 10...c4 11.♘d2 ♖e8 12.♗h4 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♘e4 14.♘xe4 ♖xe4 15.♗g3 ♖e8 16.e4 dxe4 17.♗xc4 ♘b6 18.♗b3 ♗e6 19.♗xe6 ♖xe6⇄ Edouard-Peralta, Andorra 2009. **11.bxc3**



Analysis diagram

11...♘e4 11...b6 is unconvincing because of 12.dxc5!? bxc5 13.c4±. The following game shows that the move 11...c4 by itself, without control of e4, is not sufficient for equality: 12.♘d2 ♖e8 13.♗f3 ♘e4 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.♗f4 (again, White has to spend a tempo retreating the bishop, but now Black has two pawns hanging) 15...♕d5 (he wanted to leave this square free for the knight, but alas, this has not been possible) 16.♖fb1 ♘f6 17.♖b4 b5 18.a4 ♗d7 19.axb5 ♗xb5 20.♖a5 a6 21.♘xc4 ♕d8 22.♕a2 ♘d5 23.♘d6 ♖f8 24.♕xd5 ♕xa5 25.h3± Cmilyte-Iotov, Novi Sad 2009. **12.c4** Otherwise Black himself will play ...c5-c4, seizing space and blockading his opponent's position. Opening lines favours White, because he is better developed. Of course, he also has the two bishops, but Black can exchange one of these at any moment. **12...cxd4 13.cxd5 ♖e8!** After the direct 13...♘xg5 14.♘xg5 ♘f6 15.♗d3! h6 16.♘h7 ♘xh7 17.♗xh7+ ♔h8 18.♗e4 dxe3 19.fxe3 White's chances are slightly better. **14.♖ad1** After 14.exd4 ♘b6 Black wins back the pawn and quietly completes his development. **14...h6 15.♗h4** A risky decision, better was 15.♗f4 dxe3 16.♗xe3 with roughly equal chances. **15...dxe3 16.fxe3 ♘c3 17.♗e1 ♖xe3 18.♗d3 ♕c5!**



Analysis diagram

19.♕xc3 He must agree to an endgame a pawn down, since after 19.♗xc3 ♖xd3+ or 19.♗f2 ♘xd1 20.♕xd1 ♘f6 Black's advantage is even greater. **19...♖xe1+ 20.♕xc5 ♖xf1+ 21.♗xf1 ♘xc5∓** Radjabov-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2007.

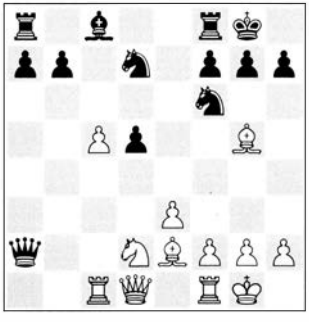
10...♗xc3

10...c4 11.♕c2 – see 10.♕c2 c4 11.♘d2.

11.bxc3 ♕xc3

It seems Black should accept the sacrifice. He does not equalise after **11...cxd4 12.cxd4 b6 13.♘b3 ♕a4** (Fressinet-N.Kosintseva, Biel 2009) **14.♕d3!** Preventing the exit of the enemy bishop to a6. If Black insists on this by 14...a5, then after 15.♕c2 ♗a6 16.♗xa6 ♖xa6 17.♖fc1± White firmly seizes the c-file.

12.♖c1 ♕a3 13.dxc5 ♕xa2



14.♗f4

An important prophylactic move, Now the bishop will not be hit by ...♘e4, and the other Black knight will not come to e5.

In a later game, White followed a different plan and obtained a small advantage after **14.♖e1** ♖e8 15.♗b5 ♕a5 16.♖b1 a6 17.♗xf6 axb5 18.♖a1 ♘xf6 19.♖xa5 ♖xa5 20.e4 dxe4 21.♘xe4 ♘xe4 22.♖xe4 ♗e6 23.h4± Barsov-Vehi Bach, Montcada 2008.

14...♖e8 15.♘f3

The white knight heads towards the centre and prevents the enemy knight coming to e5.

15...♘e4 16.♗b5

Continuing to play to restrict the enemy pieces.

16...a6

Aronian finds a tactical way to escape the pin. After 16...♕b2 17.♘d4 a6 (bad is 17...♘c3? 18.♕c2! ♕xc2 19.♖xc2 ♘xb5 20.♘xb5) 18.♗a4 ♘c3 19.♕b3 ♕xb3 20.♗xb3 ♘e4 21.♗xd5 ♘exc5 22.♘f5 Black does not manage to escape the pressure, despite the exchange of queens.

17.♗a4 ♘exc5!? 18.♖xc5 ♘xc5 19.♗xe8 ♗e6



Suddenly the white bishop is trapped. However, the complications from this are far from over.

20.♗e5!

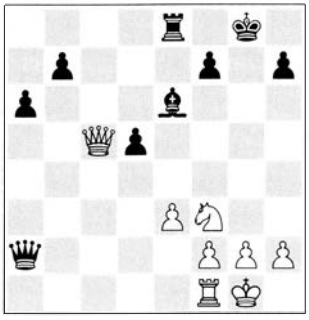
He cannot save the piece at once: 20.♕d4 ♕c4! 21.♘e5 (21.♗d6? ♘e4;

21.♘d2? ♕xd4 22.exd4 ♘d3) 21...♕xd4 22.exd4 f6! 23.♘f3 ♘d3, but White finds a nice counter-blow.

20...♖xe8 21.♗xg7! ♔xg7

Despite all the computer's recommendations, this bishop cannot be left alive.

22.♕d4+ ♔g8 23.♕xc5



As a result of the complications, White is still a pawn down, but has weakened the dark squares in the enemy position and his knight is clearly stronger than the bishop on e6. However, Black also has some strong trumps, in his connected passed pawns on the queenside.

23...♕c4 24.♕d6 ♖c8 25.h3

Useful prophylaxis: White not only makes *luft* for his king, but also takes the g4-square away from the enemy pieces.

25...♕c7

Aronian is on the ball – after the careless 25...a5? 26.♕g3+ (now we see why the g4-square had to be taken from Black!) 26...♔h8 27.♕e5+ ♔g8 28.♘d4 White's threats become very dangerous: he has a powerful force in the centre and threatens to advance the f-pawn and bring the rook into the attack via f3.

26.♕b4 a5 27.♕h4 ♕c2 28.♘d4 ♕e4 29.♕e7! b6?

In Notkin's opinion, Black should have played 29...♔h8, freeing the square g8 for the rook, after which the most likely outcome of this tense battle would have been a draw: 30.♔h2 (30.♕f6+ ♔g8 31.♔h2 ♕g6 32.♕e7 ♔h8 33.f4 ♗xh3! 34.♔xh3 ♖g8 35.♕g5 ♕a6! 36.♕e5+ f6 37.♕e6 ♕xf1 38.♕xf6+ ♖g7 with perpetual) 30...♖g8 31.g3 (31.♕f6+ ♖g7 32.♕d8+) 31...♖g6 32.♖c1 ♔g7 33.♘xe6+ ♖xe6 34.♕xb7 ♖f6 35.♕b2 a4=.

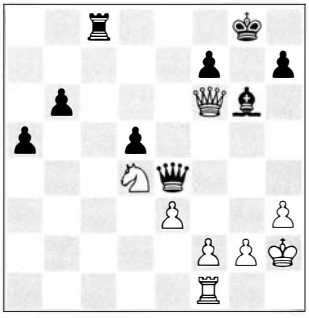
30.♔h2!

A move in the style of Karpov – in the middle of a sharp battle, he simply moves the king off the first rank! Now he threatens f2-f4, and the capture of the e3 pawn will not come with check.

30...♗f5

30...h6 does not help because of 31.f4 ♕xe3 32.♘f5! with decisive threats.

31.♕f6 ♗g6



32.f4! ♕xe3 33.♖f3 ♕c1

The endgame a piece down after 33...♕e8 34.f5 ♕d8 35.fxg6 ♕xf6 36.♖xf6 hxg6 37.♖xb6 is hopeless for Black, whilst after 33...♕e1 34.♖g3

♖c1 White mates first: 35.♕d8+ ♔g7 36.♘f5#.

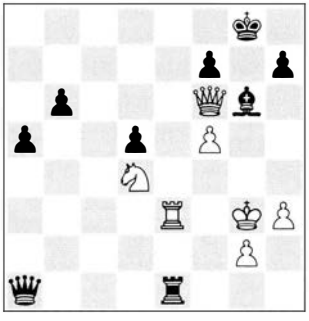
34.♖g3! ♕a1

Aronian defends very inventively: he finds the only way to stop the enemy knight coming to f5.

35.f5 ♖c1 36.♖e3 ♖h1+

After 36...♖e1 White forces a beautiful mate: 37.♕d8+ ♔g7 38.f6+ ♔h6 39.♕f8+ ♔h5 (39...♔g5 40.♘f3+ ♔xf6 41.♖xe1) 40.g4+ ♔g5 41.♘f3+ ♔f4 42.♕h6#! – Morozevich had managed to calculate this variation.

37.♔g3 ♖e1



38.♖f3

In time-trouble, Morozevich misses a fantastic win: 38.♕d8+ ♔g7 39.f6+ ♔h6 40.♔h4! (threatening 41.♕f8#) 40...♕xd4+ 41.g4 ♕b4 42.♕f8+!! ♕xf8 43.g5#.

38...♖f1 39.fxg6?

Now he could win by 39.♕d8+ ♔g7 40.f6+ ♔h6 41.♔h4!! ♕e1+ 42.g3 ♕e4+ 43.g4 ♕e1+ 44.♖g3.

39...♖xf3+ 40.♕xf3

After 40.gxf3 hxg6 White's king is too open and he can hardly avoid perpetual check.

40...♕e1+

The knight could not be taken because of mate in two.

40...♕e1+ 41.♔f4 hxg6 42.♕xd5 ♕f2+ 43.♘f3

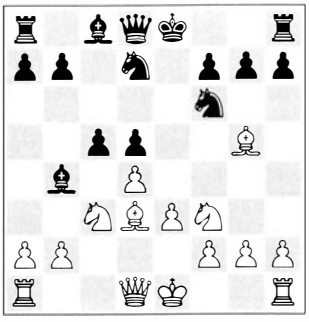
After 43.♔e5 ♕g3+ 44.♔f6 ♕h4+ the white king cannot escape from perpetual check, whilst after 43.♔g4 a4 the king is too badly placed, and Black has good play. Therefore the players agreed a draw.

Game 61
Grischuk,Alexander
Morozevich,Alexander
Mexico 2007

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 ♘bd7 7.e3 c5

Considered the most accurate move-order. If he starts with **7...0-0**, then after **8.♗d3 c5 9.0-0** the move 9...c4? does not work because of 10.♘xd5! ♕a5 11.♘xb4 ♕xb4 12.♗e2 ♘e4 13.♕c2 and White has a healthy extra pawn, Touzane-Vareille, France 1996. And after 9...♕a5?! the analogous blow promises White a dangerous initiative, e.g. 10.♘xd5! ♘xd5 11.a3 cxd4 12.axb4 ♕xb4 13.e4!? (13.♘xd4 h6 14.♕h5!?) 13...♘c7 (Reeh-Schönthier, Bad Neuenahr 1987) 14.♗d2 ♕d6 15.♕c2 and White has a strong initiative for the sacrificed pawn. Therefore Black must immediately exchange bishop for knight with **9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 c4 11.♗f5 h6 12.♗h4 ♘b6 13.♗b1!?±**, and it is not easy for Black to defend against ♕c2 and ♘e5, with direct threats on the kingside.

8.♗d3



8...♕a5

The immediate **8...c4** has also been seen, with the idea of immediately simplifying the position after **9.♗f5** (9.♗c2 ♕a5 10.0-0; 9.0-0 c4 10.♗c2) **9...♘b6**. Of course, the exchange of light-squared bishops favours Black, but it is not a panacea against all evils. After **10.♕c2** (White also keeps some initiative after 10.♗xc8 ♖xc8 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘e5, although here Black should not have great problems in my opinion, e.g. 12...♗e7 13.f4 ♘e8 14.♗xe7 ♕xe7 15.♕f3 ♖d8 16.a4 a5⇄ Sakaev-Alexandrov, Internet 2004) **10...♗e7 11.♘e5 ♗xf5 12.♕xf5** (the white queen is very aggressively placed on this square, and is not so easy to kick away) **12...0-0 13.h4 ♘e8 14.♖h3 ♕d6 15.0-0-0**, Azmaiparashvili-Alexandrov, Calvia 2004, the position remains extremely sharp, but in my opinion, White retains good attacking chances.

9.♕c2

An interesting alternative is the pawn sacrifice **9.0-0 c4 10.♗c2!?** 10.♗f5 0-0 11.♕c2 transposes into the main line. **10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♕xc3 12.♖c1 ♕a3 13.♘e5 b5 14.♘xd7 ♗xd7 15.♕f3 ♕d6** (Khenkin-Milov, Polanica Zdroj 1999) **16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.e4**⩲.

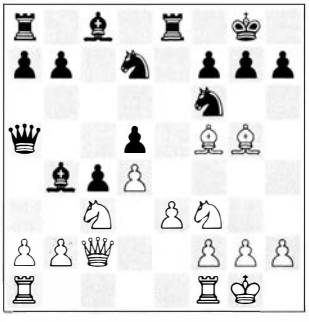
9...c4

Continuing the typical plan, aiming to create a blockade on the light squares. Compared with the variation with 8.♗e2, here Black wins a tempo, but in return, White does not have his bishop on the passive square e2, but can bring it outside the pawn chain.

10.♗f5 0-0

10...g6 looks quite risky because of **11.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 12.e4 0-0 13.0-0 ♘b6 14.e5 ♗f5 15.♕d2 ♖fe8** 15...♗e4? 16.♗f6 ♖fe8 17.a3 ♗xf3 18.axb4 ♕xb4 19.♕h6, and Black resigned, Grischuk-B.Savchenko, Moscow 2007. **16.a3 ♗f8 17.a4 ♘d7 18.h3 a6 19.g4 ♗e6 20.♗h6 ♗b4 21.♘g5**± Grischuk-V. Filippov, Fügen 2006.

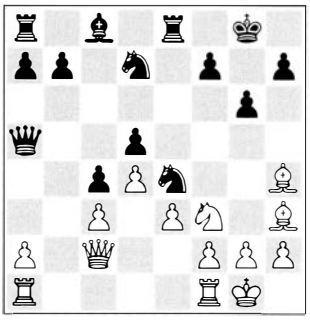
11.0-0 ♖e8



12.♘d2

Both sides continue the battle for the key square e4. In recent times, the logical move **12.♗h4** has fallen out of fashion somewhat (this is pure prophylaxis: the bishop moves away from the tempo gain ...♘e4, whilst his knight stays on f3, so as at the appropriate moment to jump forwards, to e5 or g5): **12...g6**

13.♗h3 13.♗xd7 ♘xd7 14.♘d2, with the idea of quickly playing e3-e4, is harmless because of 14...♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♘b6 16.e4 ♕a4 17.♕b1 ♗d7 18.♖e1 ♖e6 19.f3 ♖ae8 20.♕c1 f6⇄ Karpov-Giorgadze, Villarrobledo 1997.
13...♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♘e4



Analysis diagram

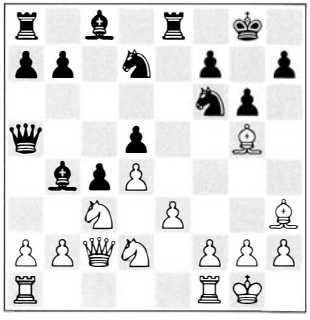
15.♖fc1 The minus of the plan with 12.♗h4 is that now White has to spend a tempo on the defence of c3 and, to do so, must place one of his rooks in a passive position. **15...♘b6** 15...f6!? 16.♘d2 g5 17.♗g3 ♘b6 18.♗xc8 ♖axc8 19.♘f1 ♘a4 20.f3 ♘xg3 21.hxg3 b5 22.g4 Karpov-Hjartarson, Reykjavik 1991. Purely optically, White's position looks better, since he can create threats on the kingside, but objectively, Black probably has sufficient counterplay. **16.♗xc8 ♖axc8 17.a4 ♔g7 18.♘g5 ♖c6 19.♘xe4 dxe4 20.♖cb1 ♘d5 21.♖xb7 ♕xc3 22.♕xc3 ♘xc3 23.♔f1±** Moiseenko-Aronian, Warsaw 2005.

12...g6

Black makes the bishop clarify its intentions at once. It looks passive to play **12...♗e7 13.f3 h6 14.♗h4 ♘b6 15.♖ae1** The bishop on f5 is defended by the queen and it is best for White to wait until Black himself exchanges. **15...♗xf5 16.♕xf5 ♕b4 17.♖e2 ♕d6 18.♗g3 ♕c6 19.e4 ♕c8 20.♕xc8 ♖axc8 21.h3±** Lugovoi-Tatai, Balatonbereny 1993.

13.♗h3

It is not so easy for Black to untangle his queenside pieces, therefore it favours White to keep all the pieces on the board for now. Black has fewer problems after **13.♗xd7**; we will see this move later in the game Kramnik-Grischuk.



13...♔g7!?

This move was introduced into practice by Grandmaster Vlatko Kovacevic, in a game against Vladimir Tukmakov (Hastings 1982/83). Black's idea is not only to cover the h6-square against a possible entry by the white bishop (at the moment, this is not dangerous at all) but also to free the ♘d7 from the duty of defending its colleague.
The alternative is the immediate exchange on c3: **13...♗xc3**:

A) **14.bxc3 ♘e4 15.♘xe4 dxe4 16.♗xd7** 16.♗f4 ♘b6 17.♗xc8 ♖axc8 18.f3 ♘d5 19.fxe4 ♕xc3! 20.♕xc3 ♘xc3 21.e5 b5 22.♔f2 b4∓ Pliester-Winants, Wijk aan Zee 1994. **16...♗xd7 17.♗f4 f6 18.♗g3 ♕d5** – Black's position is slightly the more pleasant, be-

cause of his space advantage, De Jong-Tomashevsky, Plovdiv 2010;

B) **14.♕xc3 ♕xc3 15.bxc3 ♘e4** 15...♔g7 16.♖fb1 b6 17.a4 h6 18.♗f4 g5 19.♗xd7 ♗xd7 20.♗e5 ♔g6 21.f3 ♗f5 22.♖b5 ♗d7 23.♖bb1 ♗c6 – thanks to his space advantage, Black's position is slightly better, although White is very solid, Malaniuk-Vitiugov, Olginka 2011. **16.♘xe4 dxe4**



Analysis diagram

The two bishops promise White a small initiative in this ending, but Black transfers the knight to d5 and obtains sufficient counterplay, e.g. **17.♖fb1** Karpov's manoeuvre 17.♗g4 ♘b6 18.♗e2 deserves consideration, thanks to which White preserves the advantage of the two bishops, and, by tying Black to the defence of c4, hinders the manoeuvre ...♘b6-d5. For example, 18...♗e6 19.♖ab1 ♖ac8 20.♖fc1 ♖c7 21.f3 ♗d5 22.♔f2, and White is slightly better, Karpov-Milov, Cap d'Agde 2002. **17...♘b6 18.♗xc8** 18.♖b5 f5 19.g4 fxg4 20.♗f1 ♗d7⇄ Sakaev-Lautier, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005. **18...♖axc8 19.a4 ♘d5 20.♖xb7 ♘xc3 21.a5 a6 22.♔f1 ♘d5 23.♔e1 c3** with sufficient counterplay for Black, Seirawan-Sosonko, Wijk aan Zee 1986.

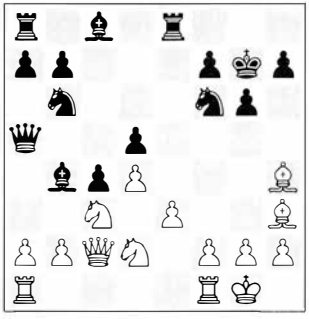
14.♖ae1

White wants to advance f3 and e4, developing the initiative in the centre and on the kingside. Let us consider some other possibilities:

A) There is no particular reason to force the ending, as Black is always well-prepared for it: **14.a3** ♗xc3 15.♕xc3 ♕xc3 16.bxc3 h6 17.♗xf6+ ♘xf6 18.♗xc8 ♖axc8 19.♖fb1 ♖e7= Bakre-Koneru, Mumbai 2009;

B) **14.♖fd1** looks pointless, e.g.: 14...h6 15.♗h4 ♗xc3 16.♕xc3 ♕xc3 17.bxc3 g5 18.♗xd7 ♘xd7 19.♗g3 ♘b6 20.a4 ♗d7 21.a5 ♘a4 22.♖a3 b5 23.axb6 axb6 – Black has the initiative, Kveinys-Emelin, Neustadt an der Weinstraße 2009;

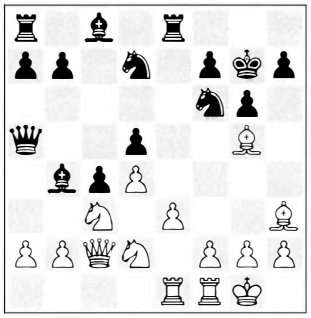
C) **14.♗h4 ♘b6!?**



Analysis diagram

This is why Black needed to play ...♔g7 – now he can continue the development of his queenside. Admittedly, though, White now has an interesting tactical resource: **15.♘b3!? cxb3 16.axb3** The queen is trapped, but Black obtains sufficient compensation. **16...♗xc3 17.♖xa5 ♗xa5 18.♗xf6+ ♔xf6 19.♕c5 ♗xh3 20.gxh3 ♗d2 21.♖d1 ♗xe3 22.fxe3 ♖xe3 23.♕c7 ♔g7 24.♖f1 ♖f8 25.♕xb7 ♖xb3 26.♕xa7?!** More solid is 26.♖f2; all the while the battle takes place on two flanks, the queen is better able to show

her best qualities. Then practice has seen 26...a5 27.h4 h5 28.♕e7 a4 29.♖f6 draw, Sieciechowicz-Drozdovsky, Cappelle la Grande 2010. **26...♖xb2 27.♖f2 ♖b1+ 28.♔g2 ♘c4** and only Black can play for a win, Alexeev-Morozevich, Sochi 2007.



14...♘e4

Black could perfectly well play **14...♘b6**, not fearing the fact that his king has to step into the open for a moment: **15.♗xc8 ♖axc8 16.♗xf6+ ♔xf6 17.f4 ♗xc3** Since this has been played by Kramnik, it is easy to suspect that it is the most accurate move in this position. Practice has also seen 17...♘a4 18.f5 ♔g7 19.♘db1 ♗xc3 20.bxc3 ♖c6 (20...♖e4 21.♕f2 ♖f8 22.f6+ ♔h8⇄ I.Novikov-Mikhalchishin, Lvov 1987) 21.♖f3 ♖f6 22.♖ef1 b5 23.♕f2 ♕c7 24.fxg6 draw, Arun Prasad-A. David, Kavala 2009. **18.bxc3 ♘a4 19.f5 ♔g7 20.f6+ ♔g8 21.♘b1 ♖e4 22.♖f3 ♖ce8 23.♕f2 b5⇄** Svidler-Kramnik, Nice 2010.

Black also has another plan, outwardly more risky, although here too, Black holds the position: **14...h6 15.♗h4 g5 16.♗xd7 ♗xd7 17.♗g3 ♘h5 18.e4** 18.f4 g4 19.f5 f6∞ Grischuk-Ivanchuk, Almaty 2008. **18...♘xg3 19.fxg3!?** Opening lines for attack; a peaceful endgame arises after 19.hxg3 ♗xc3 20.bxc3 dxe4 21.♘xc4 ♕a4 22.♕xa4 ♗xa4 23.♘e3 ♗d7⇄ Zhao Jun-Wang Hao, Beijing 2009. **19...♕b6 20.♔h1 dxe4** After 20...♕xd4 21.♘f3 ♕d3 22.♕f2 ♗xc3 23.bxc3 ♕xc3 24.♘d4 White has excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawns, and Black's position looks very dangerous. **21.♘dxe4 f5 22.♘d5 ♕a5 23.♘xb4 ♕xb4**, and here White decided not to take risks and forced a draw: 24.♕f2 fxe4 25.♕f7+ ♔h8 26.♕f6+ ♔h7 27.♕f7+ ♔h8 28.♕f6+ ♔h7 with perpetual check, Aronian-Grischuk, Moscow 2010.

15.♘dxe4 dxe4 16.♗f4

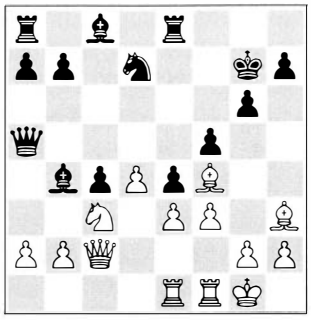
Yet again, I will point out that after the exchange on e4, the bishop on g5 is attacked. White moves the bishop in such a way as to threaten to put it on e5. Black's task is simpler after **16.♗h4** ♘b6 17.♗xc8 ♖axc8, e.g.: 18.f3 ♗xc3 19.bxc3 ♕d5 20.♗f6+ (surprising, but no more than that) 20...♔g8 21.♗e5 ♘d7 22.fxe4 ♕e6 23.♖b1 ♘xe5 24.dxe5 ♖c7 25.♖b5 ♖d7⇄ Beliavsky-Mamedyarov, Heraklion 2007.

16...f5

Black tries to shut the ♗h3 out of the game. Previously, Black had played **16...♘b6** 17.♗xc8 ♖axc8 18.f3 exf3 19.♖xf3 f5 20.e4 ♔g8 21.♗g3 fxe4 22.♖xe4 ♗xc3 23.bxc3 ♕d5 24.♖g4, and White's threats on the kingside are very dangerous, Khuzman-Dreev, Uzhgorod 1987.

17.f3

White tries to open the game as quickly as possible, so as to exploit his lead in development, and, especially, his extra forces on the kingside.



17...♘f6

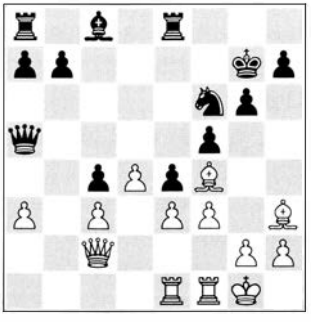
After **17...exf3!?** 18.gxf3 (18.e4!?) 18...♘f6 19.♗g2! ♕b6 (otherwise White plays e3-e4) 20.♗e5 ♗e6 White has a pleasant choice between the immediate 21.e4 and preparatory moves such as 21.♕f2. Black has quite an unpleasant position.

18.a3!?

White offers a pawn sacrifice, in order to deflect the queen further from the kingside.

After **18.♗e5?! ♖xe5! 19.dxe5 ♕xe5** Black has good positional compensation for the exchange. Black carried out a similar idea in the following game: **18.♕f2 exf3 19.gxf3 ♘d5 20.♗e5+ ♖xe5 21.dxe5 ♘xc3 22.bxc3 ♗xc3 23.♖c1 ♗e6** – Black is at least equal, Tregubov-Delchev, France 2008.

18...♗xc3 19.bxc3



19...h5?!

In such a very sharp position, Black cannot permit himself the slightest lapse or make moves according to general considerations. White obtains for free an important tempo to include the queen in the attack.

Of course, taking the pawn is very dangerous: **19...♕xa3 20.♗e5! exf3** The exchange sacrifice does not work here: 20...♖xe5 21.dxe5 ♘d5 22.fxe4 ♕xc3 23.♕f2 with decisive threats. **21.gxf3** – White quickly effects e3-e4 and seizes the initiative.

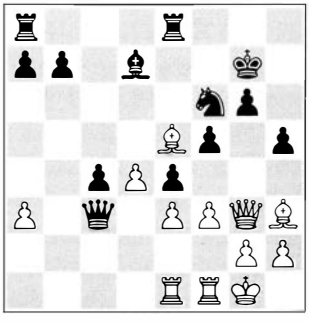
A very sharp position arises after **19...exf3 20.gxf3 ♘d5 21.♗e5+ ♔g8**, e.g. 22.e4 fxe4 23.♗xc8 ♖axc8 24.fxe4 ♕xc3!.

The quiet **19...♗d7** also deserves consideration.

20.♕f2!

Grischuk does not miss his chance. The opponent has weak squares on the kingside, and he transfers a second piece there, which can exploit this circumstance.

20...♗d7 21.♕g3 ♕xc3 22.♗e5



22...♕xa3?

He also loses after 22...♖xe5?! 23.dxe5 ♘h7 24.fxe4. Black could have held by

22...exf3 23.gxf3 (23.♖xf3? ♖xe5! 24.dxe5 ♘e4 25.♕h4 g5∓) 23...♔f7 (maybe he should try 23...h4!? 24.♕xh4 ♖xe5! 25.dxe5 ♕xe5 26.♕xc4 ♗b5 27.♕b3±) 24.e4!? ♕xa3 25.♔h1 ♕e7, although after 26.exf5 gxf5 27.d5 White's threats are very dangerous.

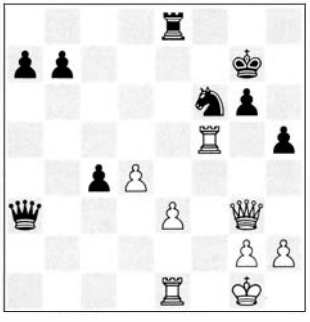
23.fxe4 ♖xe5

Black was counting on this typical sacrifice, but had missed a strong intermediate move.

24.exf5!

Now the black position collapses, whereas after the direct 24.♕xe5? ♖e8! 25.♕c7 ♖xe4∞ he could look to the future with confidence.

24...♖xf5 25.♗xf5 ♗xf5 26.♖xf5 ♖e8



27.♖e5?!

A time-trouble inaccuracy. 27.♖ef1 was winning at once, e.g. 27...♘g4 (27...♖f8 28.♖xf6 ♖xf6 29.♕c7+ ♔h6 30.♖xf6 ♕xe3+ 31.♖f2) 28.♕c7+ ♔h8 29.♖f7 ♕xe3+ 30.♔h1 ♕h6 31.♕xc4 ♘e3 32.♕b5.

27...♕d6 28.♖xe8 ♘xe8

Resistance could be prolonged by 28...♕xg3 29.hxg3 ♘xe8, although the endgame is undoubtedly winning for White.

29.♕f3 b5 30.♕b7+ ♘c7 31.♕xa7 b4

The counterplay is clearly too late. White has his connected passed pawns, and he still has play against the enemy king.

32.e4 c3 33.e5 ♕e7 34.♕b7

Stopping the black pawns advancing further.

34...♔h6 35.♖f1 c2 36.♖c1 ♕g5 37.♖xc2 ♕e3+ 38.♖f2 ♘e6 39.♕xb4 ♕c1+ 40.♖f1 ♕e3+ 41.♔h1

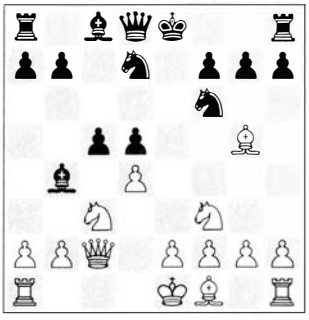
Time-trouble is over and Black resigned.

Game 62
Kramnik, Vladimir
Grischuk, Alexander
Nice 2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4

'The variation arising after 4...♗b4 bears the name Ragozin, although Ragozin himself preferred 5...h6 after 5.♗g5. After 5...♘bd7 we transpose to the Westphalia Variation of the Queen's Gambit, Westphalia being an ancient part of western Germany, where Dortmund is located (I know that the variation is named after the ship Westphalia, on which the participants travelled to the New York 1924 tournament, but for me, it is nicer to think of Dortmund)' – Kramnik in *64*.

5.♗g5 ♘bd7 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♕c2 c5



8.e3

I would point out another quite recent idea, involving the fianchetto of the light-squared bishop: **8.g3!? h6 9.♗xf6** The retreat of the bishop is also worth considering – 9.♗d2 0-0 10.♗g2 b6 11.0-0 ♖e8 12.♖fd1 ♗b7 13.e3 ♕e7 14.♘e2 ♗xd2 15.♘xd2 ♖ac8 16.♕f5 cxd4 17.♘xd4∞ Khismatullin-Sjugirov, Olginka 2011. **9...♘xf6 10.♗g2 0-0 11.0-0 ♕e7 12.dxc5 ♗xc5 13.♖ad1 ♖d8 14.♘d4 ♗g4 15.h3 ♗e6 16.♕b3 ♖ac8⇄** Topalov-Kramnik, Monaco 2011.

8...♕a5 9.♗d3 c4 10.♗f5 0-0 11.0-0 ♖e8 12.♘d2 g6 13.♗xd7 ♘xd7 14.e4

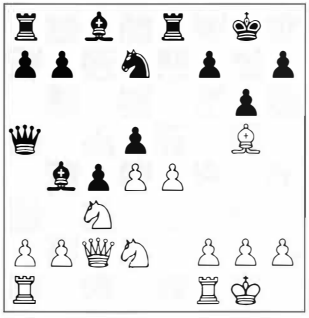
'This rare move was included in my repertoire especially for use in rapid play. I was not convinced that it was sufficiently good for a classical game, but this is one of the pleasures of Nice – I can try out all of my ideas in rapid chess. I think these days all players have a separate repertoire for rapid chess, and some even for blitz. The move clearly came as a surprise to Alexander and he started thinking' – Kramnik.

I will mention White's other ideas:

A) **14.a3** ♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♘b6 16.f3 ♗d7 17.♖fe1 ♗a4 18.♕c1 ♗c6 19.♖a2 ♖e6 20.♘f1 ♖ae8 21.h4 ♘c8⇄ Kasparov-Tatai, Dubai 1986;

B) **14.h4** ♘b6 15.f3 ♗f8 16.e4 ♗g7 17.♗e3 ♗e6 18.a4 ♗d7 19.h5 ♖ac8 20.♖fe1 ♗c6 21.hxg6 hxg6 22.e5 ♘a8 23.♘f1 ♘c7⇄ Cheparinov-Mamedyarov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007;

C) **14.f3 ♘b6 15.e4** If he delays this advance, then he can even end up slightly worse: 15.♗f4 ♗xc3 16.bxc3 ♕a4 17.♕c1 ♗f5 18.♖e1 ♕c6 19.♘f1 ♗d3 20.♘g3 ♖e6∓ Mamedyarov-Aronian, Moscow 2006. **15...♗xc3 16.♕xc3 ♕xc3 17.bxc3 ♗d7 18.♖ab1 ♗c6 19.e5 ♘a4 20.♖fc1 b5⇄** Kobalia-T.Kosintseva, Moscow 2010.



14...♗xc3

The correct decision – now White must go into the endgame. Black has an unpleasant position after **14...dxe4 15.♘cxe4** 15.h4!? Kramnik. **15...♗xd2 16.♗xd2 ♕d5 17.♖ae1±** Babula-Molnar, Pardubice 2009.

15.♕xc3

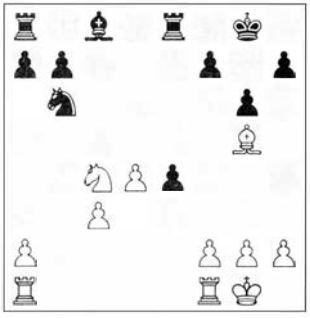
He cannot keep the queens on, because after **15.bxc3 dxe4** the bishop on g5 comes under attack (yet again!). After 16.h4 f6 17.♗f4 ♕f5 18.♗g3 ♘b6 19.♖fe1 e3 the players agreed a draw in Jussupow-Luther, Germany Bundesliga 1991/92.

15...♕xc3 16.bxc3 dxe4

An interesting alternative is **16...f6!?** 17.♗h4 g5 18.♗g3 ♘b6 19.f4 (19.f3!? Kramnik) 19...g4 20.f5 dxe4 21.♖f4 h5 22.♘xe4 ♘d5 23.♖e1 ♔g7 24.♖ff1 b5⇄ Landa-Efimenko, Germany Bundesliga 2009/10.

17.♘xc4 ♘b6

White is better after 17...b6 18.♘e3 ♗a6 19.c4 – he has placed all of his pieces very well (especially the ♘e3) and his central pawns noticeably restrict the enemy pieces.



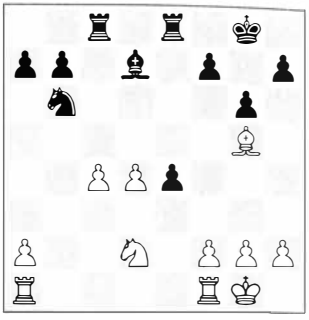
18.♘d2!

'An important move, which Black probably overlooked. The "natural" 18.♘e3 is met by 18...♗e6, after which Black manages to block the enemy central pawns and should draw without difficulty. However, after the move in the game, 18...♗e6 is impossible, since the pawn on e4 hangs, and White will manage to play c4 with pressure. Black needs to be careful, so as not to fall into a difficult position. I did not look any further at this move at home, assessing the resulting endgame as better for White' – Kramnik.

18...♗d7?!

Rybka points out an interesting tactical resource: 18...f6! 19.♗xf6 ♘d5 20.♗e5 ♘xc3, and Black is close to equality. For example: 21.♖fe1 ♗f5 22.♘c4 b5!? 23.♘d6 ♖ed8.

19.c4 ♖ac8



20.♖fc1

'Now I think 20.♖fb1!? is strongest. From a human viewpoint, it looks as though this move leads to general exchanges and a draw, but the more I analysed the variation 20...♘xc4 21.♖xb7 ♗c6 22.♖xa7 ♘xd2 23.♗xd2 ♖ed8 24.a4 at home, the more unpleasant Black's position appeared to be. Maybe he can make a draw by accurate defence, but his position is more difficult here than it turned out to be in the game. However, even after my move, White retains pressure' – Kramnik.

20...♘a4 21.♖ab1 b6

As the following variation shows, after 21...b5 22.c5 a6 Black can establish a light-square blockade only at the cost of a pawn: 23.♘f1! ♗e6 24.♘e3 h6!? (24...♗xa2 25.♖a1 ♗e6 26.c6±) 25.♗xh6 ♖ed8 26.♖b4±.

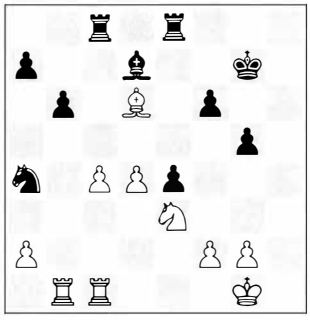
22.♘f1 ♔g7 23.h4 h6 24.♗f4 f6 25.♘e3 g5

In order not to suffocate in Kramnik's 'bear hug', Black is obliged to find some sort of counterplay.

26.hxg5

On 26.♗d6!? Kramnik did not like 26...gxh4 with the idea of ...h4-h3. Therefore, he decided first to exchange the rook's pawns, not fearing the play down the h-file.

26...hxg5 27.♗d6



As usual, Kramnik wants to create a passed pawn and advance it as far as possible. This way, the knight on a4 will also find itself out of play.

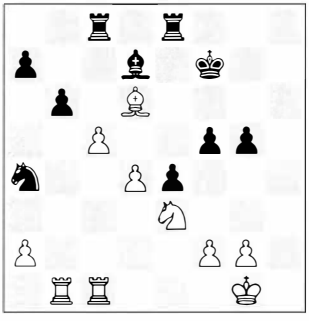
27...f5

After 27...♖h8 28.c5 ♖h7 White neutralises his opponent's threats on the h-file with the accurate reply 29.g4!, planning ♔g2 and ♖h1.

28.c5 ♔f7!

'An excellent reply! Frankly, I had thought that after 28.c5 the game was virtually decided, and not only because White has a good position, but also because Sasha had only a minute left. But I forgot that for Grischuk, the clock times do not matter. Other players might panic, but as is well-known, Sasha reacts very calmly in time-trouble. After 28...f4 29.♘d5 Black has great problems, but after the text, I could not see anything decisive for White, although Black's position looks terrible. For example, after the intended 29.♘c4 Black can calmly reply 29...♔e6, and White's advantage is not to be seen' – Kramnik.

I would add that, during the Candidates' matches in Kazan 2011, Grischuk again demonstrated that the clock does not bother him. When Sasha had just a few seconds left, even in an overwhelming position, Kramnik started involuntarily to play for time, but Grischuk defended coolly and confidently.



29.♘d5

The following note by Kramnik is interesting from the psychological point of view, and shows that when the opponent is in time-trouble, he generally seeks first the most practical decision, and only then thinks about the objective assessment of the position: 'Taking account of my opponent's time-trouble, I decided to retain the tension and keep pieces on the board. Even so, objectively 29.d5! is stronger, although Black retains reasonable chances of a draw after 29...♘xc5 30.♗xc5 f4 (nor am I convinced White is winning after 30...♖xc5 31.♖xc5 bxc5 32.♖b7 ♖d8 33.♘xf5 ♔f6 34.♘e3 ♔e5 35.♖xa7 ♔d4, and Black, despite the pawn deficit, develops great activity. However, the

computer does not believe in Black's counterplay and considers that White should win) 31.♘c4 ♖xc5 32.♘d6+ ♔e7 33.♘xe8 ♗xe8 34.♖xc5 bxc5. White's position looks winning, but home analysis shows that Black's drawing chances are greater.'

29...♖e6!

A far from obvious and very strong resource. Black takes aim at the bishop on d6 and transfers the rook to the h-file.

30.♘c7 ♖h6 31.♗e5

It is important not to allow the other rook to h8.

31...bxc5 32.dxc5 ♗c6

Black blockades the enemy passed pawn and threatens to push his central pawns, bothering the white king.

33.♖c4

After 33.♘b5 ♗xb5 34.♖xb5 ♖hc6 35.♗d4 ♘b6! Black returns the knight from a4, transferring it to d5, and obtains satisfactory play.

33...♖d8 34.♖d4 ♖xd4

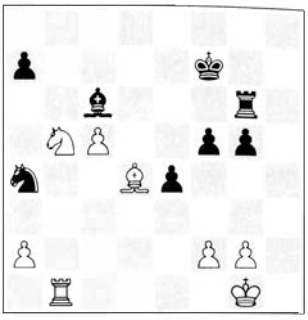
As Kramnik showed, stronger was 34...♖d7! 35.♖xd7+ (or 35.♖d6 ♖hxd6 36.cxd6 ♘c5 drawing) 35...♗xd7 36.♗d4 ♘xc5 37.♗xc5 ♖c6 38.♗e3 ♖xc7 39.♗xg5 ♔e6, and the game ends in a draw.

35.♗xd4 ♖g6?!

'Fear has big eyes.' Black thinks of defence, when instead he should either be creating threats against the enemy king: 35...f4 36.♖b8 f3 with the idea of ...e4-e3 with mating threats, or else sacrificing a pawn and activating his king: 35...♗d7 36.♘b5 ♔e6 37.♘xa7 ♔d5.

36.♘b5!

Black's idea was that after 36.♖b8 he can answer 36...♖g8, defending the back rank. But White has other objects of attack.



36...♗xb5

'Probably the decisive mistake. However, it was very difficult to find the correct move 36...♔e6. After 37.♘xa7 the black king boldly marches into the enemy camp – 37...♔d5 38.♖d1 ♔c4. White retains winning chances, but a battle still lies ahead' – Kramnik.

37.♖xb5 ♖a6

The ♘a4 is crippled, and White threatened to win it with ♖a5.

38.c6!

Kramnik has always been good at finding combinations with passed pawns.

38...♖xc6

He has to give up a pawn, since after 38...♔g6 39.♖a5! ♖xa5 40.c7 White's passed pawn promotes.

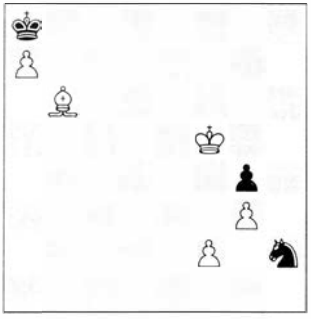
39.♖xf5+ ♔g6 40.♖a5 ♘c3 41.♗e3 ♘e2+ 42.♔f1 ♘f4 43.g3 ♘e6 44.♖xa7

White has an extra pawn, and moreover, a rook's pawn is always especially

unpleasant for a knight to deal with. It is also obvious that in this position, the bishop is much stronger than the knight.

44...g4 45.a4 ♘c7 46.♖a5 ♖c4 47.♖c5 ♖xc5 48.♗xc5 ♔f5 49.a5 ♔e6 50.♔e2 ♔d5 51.♗b6 ♘e6 52.a6 ♔c6 53.a7 ♔b7 54.♔e3 ♘g5 55.♔f4 ♘f3 56.♔xg4 1-0

'Of course, no normal person would take the e4-pawn, but it is interesting to see that in this case, Black draws: 56.♔xe4 ♔a8 57.♔f5 ♘h2.

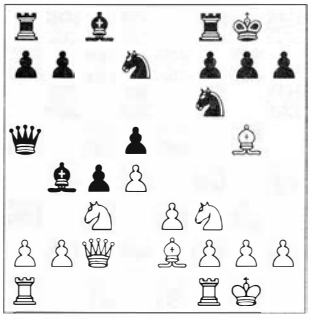


Analysis diagram

White has two extra pawns and the Black king is stuck in the corner, but White cannot win, as we have on the board a positional draw! For example, 58.f4 gxf3 59.♗g1 ♔b7 60.♔f4 ♔a8 61.♔g5 ♘f1 62.g4 f2 63.♗xf2 ♘h2 64.♔f4 ♘xg4 65.♔xg4 ♔b7 etc. So it was still not too late to spoil everything, but the pawn on g4 is much "tastier" of course' – Kramnik.

Game 63
Grischuk,Alexander
Kramnik,Vladimir
Monaco 2011

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♗g5 ♘bd7 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♕c2 0-0 8.e3 c5 9.♗d3 ♕a5 10.0-0 c4 11.♗e2



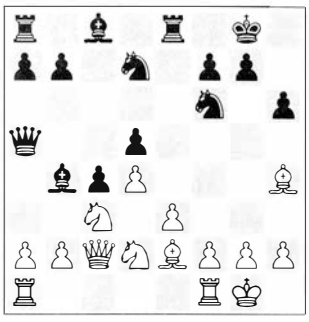
At first glance, not an especially logical move, since White could have developed the bishop to e2 at once and saved a tempo. We have already looked at the main continuation here, **11.♗f5 g6 12.♗h3**. But then after **12...♖e8 13.♘d2 ♗xc3 14.♕xc3 ♕xc3 15.bxc3 ♘e4 16.♘xe4 dxe4** White has to spend time evacuating his bishop from h3 with **17.♗g4 ♘b6 18.♗e2** etc, whereas here, we have already put the bishop on e2...

But these are, of course, all rather scholastic considerations. I think the main thing was that Grischuk just wanted to surprise his opponent and avoid his preparation, since this was a blindfold game.

11...♖e8

After the immediate **11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘e4** there follows **13.♗xc4! ♘xg5 14.♘xg5**, and White wins a pawn (14...dxc4? 15.♕xh7#). Commenting on the game, Grischuk jokingly claimed that this was the main point of 11.♗e2.

12.♘d2 h6 13.♗h4



13...♗xc3!?

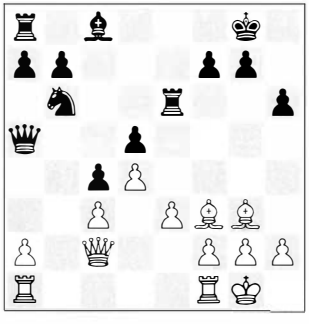
Kramnik consistently carries out the Westphalia idea: a battle for the square e4, not hesitating to trade bishop for knight. But it turns out that in this case, the white bishop is definitely better on e2 than d3.

14.bxc3 ♘e4 15.♘xe4 ♖xe4 16.♗g3 ♘b6?

'Too ambitious. Black tries to seize control of the square a4, but he does not have enough strength to do this. Stronger was 16...♖e6 followed by ...♘f6-e4 and ...♗d7, ...♖ae8' – Grischuk.

17.♗f3 ♖e6

The exchange sacrifice 17...♗f5 18.♗xe4 ♗xe4 19.♕d2 is hardly correct, as Black lacks enough strength to establish a firm light-square blockade.



18.a4!

It is very important to deprive the black pieces of this square. Now one is perfectly justified in saying that White has the advantage.

18...♗d7 19.♖fb1 ♗c6

After 19...♗xa4? 20.♕c1 Black cannot escape from the pin, and the main threat is 21.♗d1.

20.♗c7 ♕a6

Avoiding the opponent's small trap: 20...♖c8? 21.♗xb6 axb6 22.♗g4.

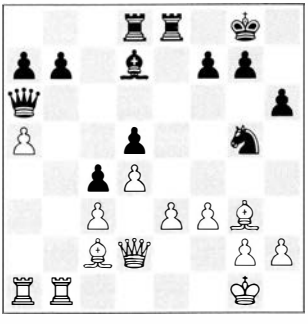
21.a5 ♘d7 22.♗g4 ♖ee8 23.♗f5 ♘f8

'Nobody in his right mind would play 23...g6 24.♗xg6 fxg6 25.♕xg6+ ♔h8 26.♕xh6+ ♔g8 27.♕g6+ ♔h8, and indeed, White wins after the surprising 28.♗d6!' – Grischuk.

24.♕d2

White frees the c2-square for his bishop. Having cramped his opponent on the queenside, he still retains the idea of attacking him on the other wing.

24...♘e6 25.♗g3 ♖ad8 26.f3 ♗d7 27.♗c2 ♘g5



28.♗c7

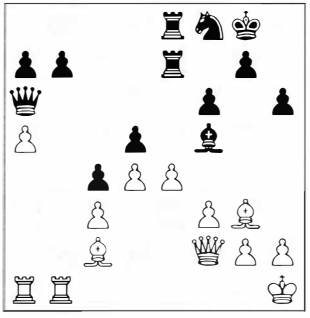
'I wanted to drive the knight from g5, so as to advance e3-e4, but I didn't want to play h3-h4, because after 28.h4 ♘h7 29.e4 dxe4 30.fxe4 ♘f6 the knight gets to g4. This is the explanation of my subsequent strange manoeuvres' – Grischuk.

28...♖c8 29.♗f4 ♘e6 30.♗g3 ♘g5 31.♗h4 ♖c7 32.♗g3 ♖cc8 33.♔h1

Not finding a precise plan, White tries to strengthen his position and awaits a mistake from his opponent.

33...♖e7 34.♗e5 ♖ce8 35.♕f2 f6 36.♗f4 ♘e6 37.♗g3 ♘f8 38.e4 ♗f5?!

And it comes. He should have attacked the enemy pawn centre with 38...f5, although after 39.e5 White's chances are preferable. The text-move leads by force to great difficulties.



39.exf5!

'Of course, I had overlooked 38...♗f5, but I am not convinced that Vladimir had seen the main idea of his move. After 39.exd5 ♖e2 40.♕xe2 ♖xe2 41.♗xf5 White has a winning position, but the unexpected 39...♗d3! gives Black good counterplay. Fortunately, I quickly found the correct decision and did not look at alternatives' – Grischuk.

39...♖e2 40.♗a4 ♖xf2 41.♗xe8 ♖d2?

'Now it is all over. The last chance was 41...♖c2, and White has to find 42.♗b5 (42.♗f4 b5!! 43.axb6 ♖a2 44.b7 ♕xb7!) 42...♖c1+ 43.♖xc1 ♕xb5 44.a6! (44.♖cb1 ♕a6 45.h3) 44...bxa6 45.♖cb1 ♕d7 46.♖b8 ♔f7 47.♖ab1 ♕xf5 48.♖1b7+ ♘d7 49.♖a8! (surprisingly sharp play begins after 49.♖d8 ♔e7 50.♖dxd7+ ♕xd7 51.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 I was not sure if White was winning or not) 49...♔e6 50.♖axa7' – Grischuk.

42.h4!

After the immediate 42.♗b5 there would follow 42...♖d1+. Therefore, White moves his king off the back rank and creates the threat of winning the queen.

42...g6

42...b5 does not help because of 43.axb6ep ♖a2 44.b7, and White wins.

43.fxg6 ♖e2 44.♗f7+ ♔g7 45.h5 ♕c6 46.♖e1 ♖xe1+ 47.♖xe1 ♕d7 48.♔g1!

Preventing the opponent's counterplay, connected with the queen coming to f5 and an attack on the h5 pawn. Admittedly, after 48.♖e8 ♕f5 White also has a path to victory: 49.♖e5!, but to find such a move blindfold, in a short amount of time, is not easy.

48...b5 49.axb6 axb6 50.♖e8 b5 51.♖b8 ♕e7 52.♗xd5

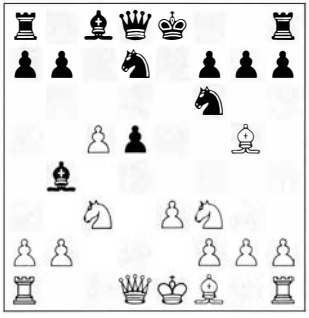
Black resigned.

'The following day in the lift, I met Victor Kortchnoi, and he paid me an interesting compliment: "Hmm, your game

with Kramnik... mmm... you even played it consistently!"' – Grischuk.

Game 64
Kramnik,Vladimir
Mamedyarov,Shakhriyar
Dortmund 2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♗g5 ♘bd7 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e3 c5 8.dxc5!?



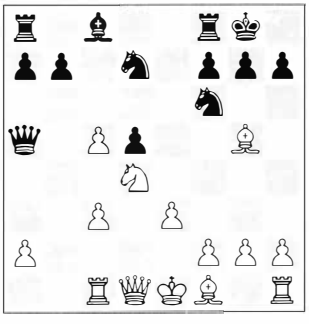
This very concrete move was played almost a hundred years ago by Showalter and Euwe, but its current popularity dates from the 1980s, and is due to Grandmaster Igor Novikov, who now lives in the USA. In our day, the Novikov Variation (as I think it deserves to be named) has become a favourite weapon of Vladimir Kramnik. White draws the fire on himself, inviting his opponent to fight for all he is worth for the square c3, and in many cases his king remains uncastled. What is he counting on? Mainly on the depth and quality of his home preparation, which allows him to repulse the opponent's rather hasty attack and retain his extra material.

8...♕a5 9.♖c1

9.♘d2 ♘e4 10.♘dxe4 dxe4 11.♕d4 0-0 12.a3 12.0-0-0 ♘xc5 13.♘d5 ♘e6 14.♕xb4 ♕xb4 15.♘xb4 ♘xg5 16.♗e2±. **12...♗xc3+ 13.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♘xc5 15.♗e7! ♘b3 16.♖d1 ♖e8 17.♗b5 ♗g4! 18.♗xe8 ♗xd1 19.♔xd1 ♖xe8 20.♗b4 ♖c8=** Karpov-Lautier, France 1993.

9...♘e4

Taking the a2 pawn is not to be recommended: **9...♕xa2?!** 10.♗xf6 ♘xf6 11.♗b5+ ♗d7 12.0-0 ♗xc3 13.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 14.♖xc3 0-0 15.b4± Lingnau-Gebhardt, Dortmund 1992.
At the present moment (May 2011) it is considered that in the variation with 9...♘e4 the last word was spoken by White in the game we are examining. Therefore Black players (including Kramnik himself) have switched to **9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 0-0** White is better after 10...♕xc5 11.♕d4± and even more so after 10...♘e4? 11.♕xd5±. **11.♘d4!** White gets nothing from 11.♗d3 ♘e4 12.0-0 ♘dxc5 13.♗b1 ♘a4 14.c4 ♗g4 15.♕xd5 ♕xd5 16.cxd5 ♗xf3 17.♗e7 ♘ec3 18.♗xf8 ♗xd5 draw, I.Novikov-Blatny, Budapest 1991.



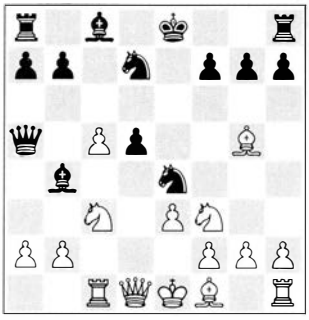
Analysis diagram

A) **11...♕xa2** 'If Black manages to place his knights on c4 and e4, then he will be fine, but this is not so easy. For a long time, it seemed to me that Black

should take on c5 and I worked on this for quite a while, but I could not find equality. For the present game, I had prepared a more principled variation' – Tomashevsky. **12.♗e2** 12.♗f4!?. **12...♕a3 13.♘b5 ♕xc5 14.♗f4 ♘e8!** 'Because Black has abstained from putting his knight on e4, I had the idea of this strange retreat. Of course, I did not want to do it, but... Black keeps an extra pawn and no obvious white threats are apparent. Undoubtedly, he has sufficient compensation, maybe even more than sufficient. But it seems to me that it is not so easy to play White's position' – Tomashevsky. **15.0-0 ♘b6 16.♕d4** 'Absolutely correct. The computer also cries at once that White is fine. I looked at similar endgames and came to the conclusion that White has sufficient compensation. But Black's moves are more or less forced, whilst White must think the whole time about how to play...' – Tomashevsky. **16...♕xd4 17.cxd4 ♗d7 18.♖b1 ♗xb5 19.♖xb5 ♘f6 20.♗c7 ♘fd7** Potkin-Tomashevsky, Moscow 2010. 'Here my home analysis ended with a verdict of equality. It was possible to continue for a few more moves, but I am a player of a practical type and did not analyse the position to mate' – Tomashevsky.

B) The following game shows that the capture on c5 does indeed allow White to count on an advantage: **11...♕xc5** 12.♗d3 ♘e4 13.♗f4 ♘b6 14.♕c2 h6 15.f3 ♘f6 16.g4 ♖e8 17.♔f2 ♘c4 18.h4 ♗xg4!? 19.♗xc4 dxc4 20.fxg4 ♘xg4+ 21.♔f3± Nakamura-Grischuk, Wijk aan Zee 2011.

C) Kramnik demonstrated yet another line: **11...♘e4** 12.♗f4 ♖e8 13.f3 ♘exc5 14.♗e2 ♘e5 15.♘b3 ♘xb3 16.axb3 ♘g6 17.♗g3 ♖xe3 18.0-0 ♗f5 19.♗f2 ♖e7 20.♕d2 ♕c7 21.♖fe1 Giri-Kramnik, Monaco 2011. Here, White has sufficient compensation for the pawn, but not more.

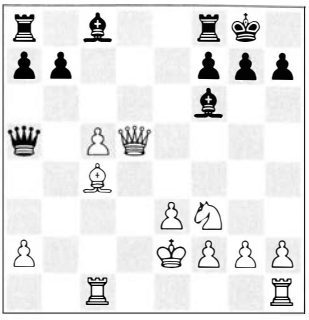


10.♕xd5! ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 12.♔d1 0-0 13.♗c4 ♘f6

In previous years, the move **13...♘xc5** was considered to be the main line, and then: **14.♗e7 ♗b4** 14...♗e6? 15.♕xc5 ♕a4+ 16.♗b3 ♗xb3+ 17.axb3 ♕xb3+ 18.♔e2 ♖ac8 (18...♕b2+ 19.♔d3 ♖fc8 (Mikhalchishin-Plachetka, Kecskemet 1983) 20.♕d5±) 19.♕f5 ♖fe8 20.♖hd1 g6 21.♕d7 b5 22.♘d2 ♕b2 23.♔f1, and Black resigned, I.Novikov-Tischbierek, Copenhagen 1991. **15.♗xf8 ♗e6 16.♕d4 ♖xf8** 16...♖d8 17.♗d6 b5 18.♗xe6 ♘xe6 19.♕e4 ♗xd6 20.♔e2 ♕xa2+ 21.♕c2±. **17.♔e2** 17.♗xe6!?. **17...♖d8** Stronger is 17...♗a3 18.♗xe6 ♗xc1 19.♗c4 ♗a3 20.♖b1±. **18.♕h4 b5 19.♗xe6 ♘xe6 20.♖c2±** I. Novikov-Schulte, Edmonton 2000.

14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♔e2

After 15.♕e4 ♖d8+ 16.♔e2 ♗d7⇄ Black quickly brings all of his pieces into play and obtains excellent counterplay.



15...b5!?

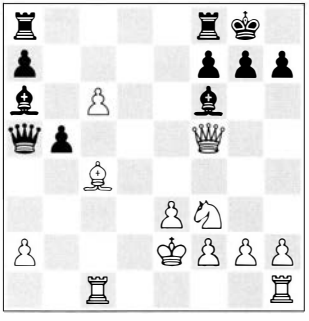
This double-edged move was introduced by Ruslan Ponomariov in a game against Kramnik at the Tal Memorial (Moscow 2009). Insufficient for equality is **15...♗e6** 16.♕e4 ♖ae8 17.♖hd1±. After **15...♗g4** 16.♖hd1 ♖ac8 17.c6 ♕xd5 18.♗xd5 bxc6 19.♖xc6 ♖xc6 20.♗xc6± (I.Novikov-Serper, Moscow 1991) Black has compensation for the pawn, of course, but it is quite clear that play is going on for two results only.

16.cxb6!?

Taking the exchange is very risky: after **16.♕xa8?! bxc4 17.♕e4 c3** with the idea of ...♗a6 and ...♕xc5 Black has a strong initiative.

'I have to admit I have not found complete equality for Black after the straightforward **16.♗b3 ♗e6** (16...b4 17.♗c4!? ♗e6 18.♕e4 ♖ae8 19.♗xe6 ♖xe6 20.♕c4) **17.♕e4 ♖ae8 18.♕c2** (he loses back the material after 18.♗xe6 ♖xe6 19.♕c2 ♖a6 20.♖hd1 ♕xa2 21.♘d4, although even here, White retains the initiative) **18...b4 19.♗xe6 ♖xe6 20.♕c4**. White has a passed pawn, which for the sake of simplicity we can call an extra pawn – "an extra passed pawn" sounds more impressive. The attempt to win it back by 20...♗c3 21.♖hd1 ♕a6 22.♕xa6 ♖xa6 23.♖c2 ♖c6 24.♖d5 ♖fc8 fails to 25.♘d2 ♖xc5 26.♖xc5 ♖xc5 27.♘e4, and the status quo is immediately restored' – Notkin.

The above-mentioned game Kramnik-Ponomariov, Moscow 2009, went **16.c6 ♗a6 17.♕f5**. Bad is 17.♗b3? b4+ 18.♔e1 ♕a3! or 17.♗d3? ♖ad8 18.♕b3 ♖xd3! 19.♔xd3 b4+ 20.♔c2 ♕f5+, whilst in the complications after 17.♖hd1 ♗c3! or 17.♕c5 ♗e7 Black's chances are not worse.



Analysis diagram

Here, instead of the game move 17...♕a3, it was worth considering **17...♗b2!?** 17...g6!? 18.♕xf6 bxc4, Kramnik. **18.♘g5** The more restrained 18.♖c2 g6 19.♕c5 ♗a3 20.♕g5 ♗e7 is not fully clear. **18...g6 19.♗xf7+ ♔h8 20.♕f4 b4+ 21.♔f3 ♗e5 22.♕e4** 22.♕h4 ♕d5+. **22...♖ae8** with a double-edged position, in which, in the computer's opinion, chances are equal.

16...♕xd5

White is better after **16...♕xb6?!** 17.♖b1 ♗e6 18.♕e4.

It appears that there have been no practical tests of **16...axb6** 17.♕xa5 ♖xa5 18.♖hd1. Of course, the two bishops promise Black good compensation for

the pawn, but even so, not everyone would choose to go into such an ending.

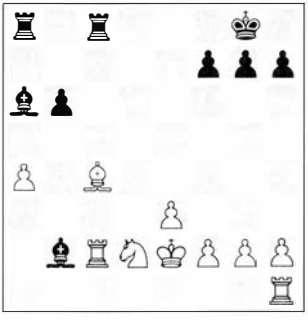
17.♗xd5 ♗a6+ 18.♗c4

An accurate move: after 18.♔e1 ♖ad8 the rook on h1 is out of play, and after 18.♔d2 ♖fd8 19.e4 ♗b7 Black forces mass exchanges and obtains equality.

18...axb6 19.a4!

Thanks to this nuance, White retains his extra pawn.

19...♗b2 20.♖c2 ♖fc8 21.♘d2



It is interesting that an analysis of this line, right down to this position, appeared in the magazine *64*, about 18 months before the Dortmund tournament. It was done by IM Max Notkin, with assistance from Kramnik, who sent him a file with various comments. But these days, it is very difficult to keep up with all sources of information. Shakhriyar either did not know about this, or else forgot it. Either way, he immediately commits a serious mistake.

21...b5?

After the game, Mamedyarov expressed the opinion that he should have retreated the bishop to f6, with drawing chances. Probably, if he had brought with him his home analysis, he would have known a precise path to a draw.

22.axb5 ♗xb5 23.♖b1!

Black had overlooked this resource. Now he has to go into a difficult endgame.

23...♗xc4+ 24.♖xc4 ♗f6 25.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 26.♘e4 ♖e8 27.f4!

Grandmaster Ian Rogers, who was working at the tournament as a correspondent, observed that Kramnik was playing so quickly, it was as if he was demonstrating his home analysis.

27...♗d4!? 28.exd4! ♖xe4+ 29.♔d3 f5 30.g3 ♖e7 31.♖b5!

Black resigned. It would be interesting to know how many moves the ex-World Champion found at the board, and how many he brought from home.

Game 65
Aronian,Levon
Kramnik,Vladimir
Moscow 2010

This game was played in the Tal Memorial. Coming into the press-centre after the game, Levon Aronian self-critically said: 'As always, I mixed things up somehow in the opening and got a variation I looked at about 5 years ago. He played a move I didn't know and we reached a very unpleasant position for me. In general, I am quite ignorant about modern theory. Earlier, White was thought to be doing well here, but a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then, and I have not been following it, of course.'

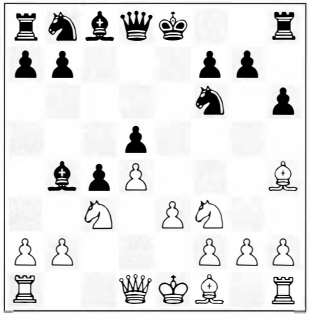
Of course, one cannot take seriously Aronian's claims to be ignorant of mod-

ern theory, but in this game, he certainly does fall into Kramnik's powerful preparation.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 d5 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗h4 c5 8.dxc5

In Aronian's words, he avoided the main line **8.e3**, because he was surprised by his opponent's choice. Certainly, if one has not refreshed one's memory with the complicated variations, then it is better not to go there, since after 8.e3 Black has at least two promising continuations:

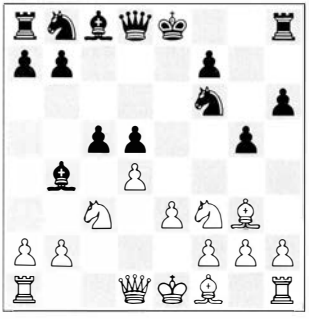
A) **8...c4!?** 'A very rare sub-variation of the Ragozin, seen before in my games. I learned of its existence thanks to Alexander Morozevich, who played it successfully against me at the Alekhine Memorial blitz in 2008. Before that, it had been played regularly by grandmaster Goran Dizdar, although without great success' – Pavel Elianov.



Analysis diagram

9.♘d2 A sharp position with mutual chances arises after 9.♗e2 g5 10.♗g3 ♘e4 11.♖c1 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♕a5 13.0-0 0-0!? 14.♕c2 ♗f5 15.♕b2 ♕b6 Moiseenko-Elianov, Odessa 2010. **9...g5 10.♗g3 ♗f5 11.♗e5** Black gets a comfortable position after 11.♗e2 0-0 12.0-0 ♖e8 13.a3 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♘c6 15.♖e1 b5 Elianov-Morozevich, Moscow 2008; it is worth considering 11.h4. **11...♗xc3** A necessary exchange, since after 11...♘bd7 12.♗xf6 ♕xf6 13.♘xd5 Black loses a pawn, whilst after 12...♘xf6 13.♕a4+ he drops a whole piece. **12.bxc3 ♘bd7 13.♗d6 ♕b6 14.♗g3** Stronger is 14.♗a3 ♕a6 15.♗b4 ♕e6 16.a4 ♘e4 with mutual chances, Gauglitz-Dizdar, Halle 1987. **14...♕b2! 15.♕c1 ♕xc1+ 16.♖xc1 b5** In this complicated ending, Black has the initiative, Radjabov-Elianov, Astrakhan 2010.

B) **8...g5 9.♗g3**

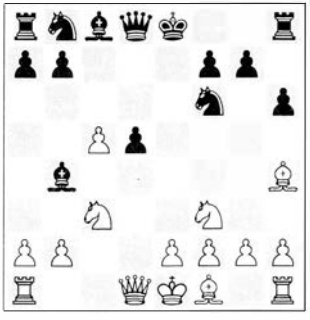


Analysis diagram

9...c4 After 9...♘e4 Black must reckon with the check 10.♗b5+. Admittedly, the situation here is far from clear after 10...♗d7 11.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 12.0-0 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 0-0 14.♖c1 ♖c8 15.♘d2 ♘xd2 16.♕xd2 ♖e8⇄ Moiseenko-Palac, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010, nor after the sharper 10...♔f8!?, e.g.: 11.dxc5 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 13.♔e2 ♗xa1 14.♕xa1 f6 15.h4 (Kasparov-Sosonko, Tilburg 1981) 15...♔g7 16.hxg5 hxg5 17.♖xh8 ♕xh8 18.♘xg5 ♘c6⇄. **10.♗e2 ♘e4 11.♖c1 ♕a5 12.♘e5!?** This aggressive raid creates the maximum difficulties for Black. Here, for example, is how one recent game continued: **12...♘c6**

13.0-0 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♘xc3 15.♖xc3 ♕xc3 16.♗h5 0-0 17.♕f3 Perpetual check results from 17.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 18.♘xf7 ♔xf7 19.♕f3+ ♔g7 20.♕xd5 ♕d3 21.♗e5+ ♘xe5 22.♕xe5+ ♔g8 23.♕e8+ ♔g7 24.♕e7+ ♔g8 25.♕e8+ ♔g7 26.♕e7+ ♔g8 27.♕e8+ draw, Nielsen-Palac, Aix-les-Bains 2011. **17...♘d8** After 17...♘xe5 18.♗xe5 ♕d3 19.♕f6 ♕h7 20.f4! White should manage to break through the opponent's defences. **18.♕f6 ♕c2 19.♘g4! ♗xg4 20.♗e5 ♕h7 21.♗xg4 ♘e6** (Topalov-Aronian, Monaco 2011) and here, as pointed out by grandmaster Golubev, after **22.♗f5! ♕g7 23.♕e7 ♖fe8 24.♕xb7 ♕f8 25.♕xd5** Black's position is unenviable.

Back to the game.



8...♘bd7 9.♖c1 ♕a5 10.a3

Black continues by analogy with the game Topalov-Carlsen, seen above (Game 56), but there, the moves 6...h6 7.♗h4 had not been included. As we will soon see, the inclusion of these moves favours Black. The following has also been seen: **10.♕d4** 0-0 11.a3 ♗xc5 12.♕d2 ♗e7 13.e3 ♕d8 14.♗e2 ♘b6 15.♘d4 ♘e4 16.♗xe7 ♕xe7 17.♘xe4 dxe4 18.♕a5± Gen.Timoschenko-Krivoshey, Slovakia 1998/99.

10...♗xc3+ 11.♖xc3 ♘e4 12.b4 ♘xc3 13.♕a1 ♕a4

It is worth considering **13...♕a6** 14.♕xc3 ♕g6 15.e3 ♕b1+ 16.♔d2 0-0 17.♖g1 a5 18.♗c4 axb4 19.axb4 ♕e4 20.♗d3 ♕e6 with mutual chances, Delchev-Palac, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010.

14.♕xc3 0-0 15.e3 a5 16.b5 ♘xc5

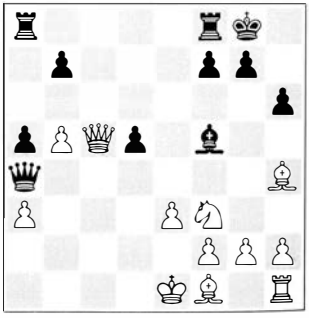
It is hard to avoid this sacrifice; after **16...b6** 17.c6 ♘c5 18.♘d4 ♖e8 19.♗d3 ♘xd3+ 20.♕xd3 ♖e4 21.♗g3 ♖a7 22.0-0 (Macieja-M.Socko, Warsaw 2010) White's advantage is indisputable.

17.♕xc5 ♗f5!

Obviously **17...♗g4? 18.♕d4** is bad, and White stabilises his position, keeping an extra piece.

Soon after the Olympiad, the following head-spinning rapid game was played: **17...♗e6?!** 18.♕d4 ♕xa3 19.♗e2 ♕c1+ 20.♕d1 ♕b2 21.0-0 a4 22.♗g3 f6 23.♘d4 ♗f7 24.♗d3 a3 25.♘f5 a2 26.♕g4 g5 27.♘xh6+ ♔g7 28.♕f5, and White won, Lahno-T.Kosintseva, Cap d'Agde 2010.

After Kramnik's novelty, Aronian thought seriously.



18.♕d4

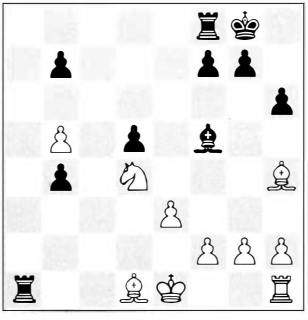
What happens if White retreats the queen into the corner (**18.♕c1 ♖ac8 19.♕a1**), by analogy with Topalov-Carlsen? The point is that now Black has **19...♗g4!**, threatening to take on f3 and h4 (it is interesting that in this case, the bishop comes under attack on h4, and not on g5, as is usually the case!). Now after **20.♘d4?** there follows **20...♖c3!**, and the rook is immune because of mate on d1, whilst on **20.♗g3** the reply **20...d4!** is very strong, when again 21.♘xd4? ♖c3 is bad.

Consequently, White closes the 4th rank with his queen, but in the process, loses the a3 pawn.

18...♕xa3 19.♗e2 ♕b4+ 20.♕xb4 axb4

'Kramnik's passed pawns always queen' – this phrase has almost become an aphorism. But here, we have the exception that proves the rule.

21.♘d4 ♖a1+! 22.♗d1



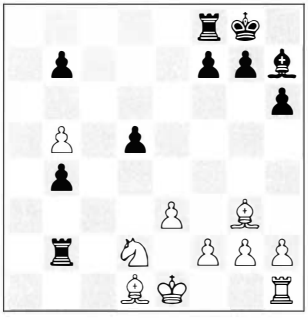
Up to now, Kramnik had played quite quickly, showing that it was all home preparation. But now he played a move which the computer sharply criticises.

22...♗h7?

Instead of this, Rybka suggests **22...♖fa8!**. Now **23.♘xf5?** is bad because of **23...b3! 24.♘e7+ ♔f8 25.♘xd5** Or 25.♔e2 b2. **25...b2 26.♘c3 ♖c8 27.♔d2 ♖xc3** winning. More tenacious is **23.0-0**, but here too, after 23...♗d3 24.♖e1 ♗c4 25.f4 ♖e8! 26.b6 b3 27.♗xb3 ♖xe1+ 28.♗xe1 ♗xb3 29.♘xb3 ♖xe3 Black has a decisive advantage.

So what is going on, did Kramnik not analyse this line to a win? The following day, he explained the situation. It turns out that he had found two ways to win: 21...♖fc8 22.♗d1 ♗h7 and 21...♖a1+ 22.♗d1 ♖fa8. As a result, he played one move from one variation and one from the other: 21...♖a1+ 22.♗d1 ♗h7. After this, the position turns out to be practically equal, although outwardly it still looks attractive for Black. Kramnik was upset, because he knew for a fact that he had a forced win, and he did not want to make a draw, and so he started looking for the needle in the haystack. But it was no longer there.

23.♘b3 ♖b1 24.♘d2 ♖b2 25.♗g3

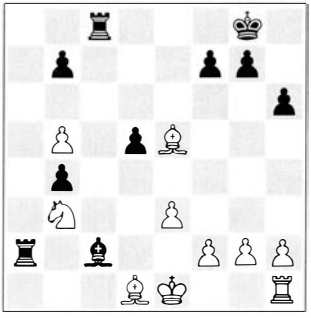


25...♖c8

According to Aronian, he had been afraid of 25...♖e8 (not allowing the white bishop into e5) 26.♔e2? d4, and

White's position is hanging by a thread. However, stronger is 26.♘b3 ♗e4 27.♗d6 with chances for both sides.

26.♗e5 ♖a2 27.♘b3 ♗c2



Once again, purely visually, it seems this move should win. What else can Black expect? After all, he has two rooks on the seventh and a strong passed pawn, whilst the opponent is still behind in development. But it is all an illusion.

28.♗xc2 ♖cxc2 29.0-0 f6 30.♗d4 ♖a3 31.♘a1!

White's defence is all based on this unaesthetic, but very strong move.

31...♖d2

Black has the interesting resource 31...b3!? counting on the stingy 32.♘xc2 bxc2 33.♗b2. Then after 33...♖b3 34.♗c1 ♖xb5 he obtains excellent winning chances. However, the cold-blooded 32.g3 is stronger, and after 32...♖c4 33.♖b1 ♖a5 34.b6 b2 35.♘b3 ♖b5 36.♖xb2 ♖cb4 37.♖c2 ♖xb3 38.♖c7 the game is close to a draw.

32.h3 ♖ad3 33.♔h2 ♖a3

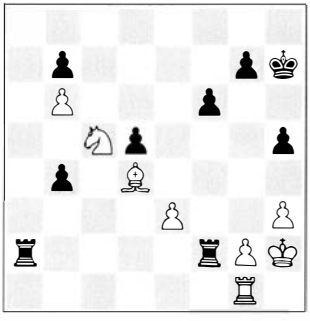
At first, Kramnik planned to exchange rooks with **33...♖d1**, but then he changed his mind. Why? Apparently, he came to the conclusion that after 34.♖xd1 ♖xd1 35.♘b3 ♖d3 36.♘c5 ♖d2 37.b6 only White could count on an advantage.

Another try for Black is **33...h5**, but here too, after 34.♔g3 (bad is 34.♖b1? ♖xf2 or 34.g4? h4) 34...b3 35.♖b1 ♖xd4 36.exd4 b2 37.f3 (37.♘b3? ♖d3+) 37...bxa1♕ 38.♖xa1 ♖xd4 39.♖a7 the position equalises out.

34.b6!

Fixing the b7 pawn and threatening ♘a1-b3-c5xb7. Aronian considered that the situation had changed sharply and that now his position was winning. But this is not the case.

34...h5 35.♖b1 ♖xf2 36.♘b3 ♖aa2 37.♖g1 ♔h7 38.♘c5



38...♖fd2?

The wrong rook! Evidently, the sharp turn of affairs had affected Kramnik and he lost his usual calmness, missing the drawing line 38...♖ad2! 39.♘xb7 b3 40.♘c5 b2 41.b7 ♖xg2+! 42.♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 43.♔xg2 b1♕ 44.♗a7, and the black queen gives perpetual check.

39.♘xb7 b3 40.♘c5 b2 41.♖b1!

'Kramnik set me one last trap – 41.b7 ♖xg2+!, but I decided not to fall into it!' (Aronian). Black resigned.

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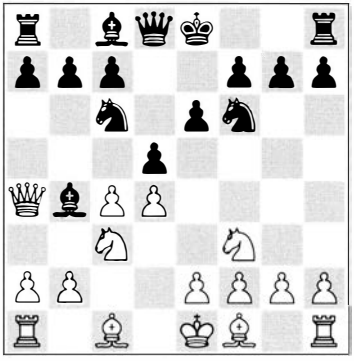
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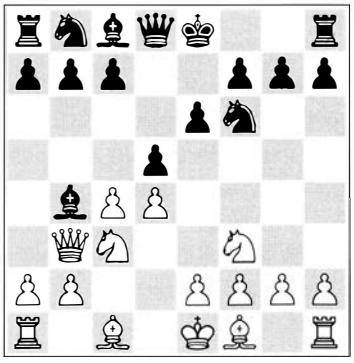
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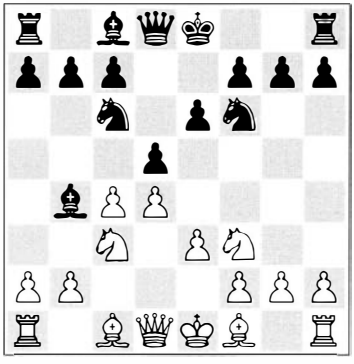
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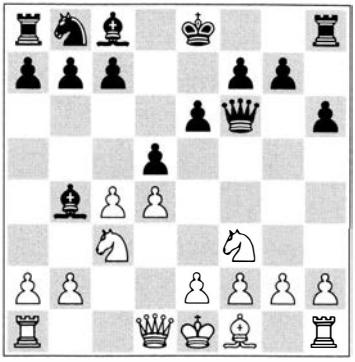
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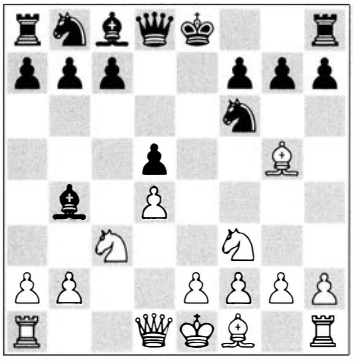
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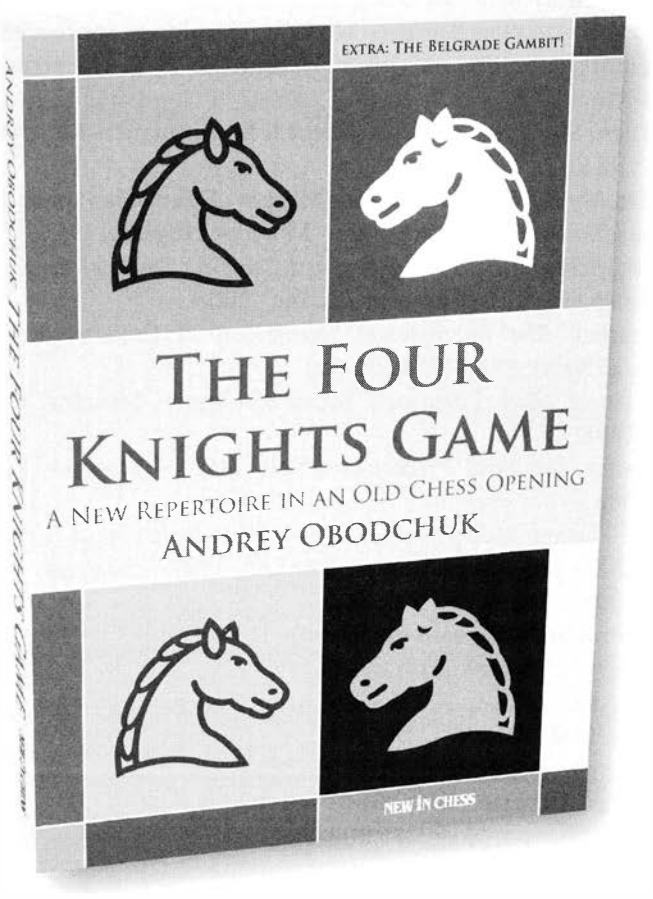


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